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Depression Lit'ry Life *Leon Edel*

Dear Aleksandr *Irving Howe*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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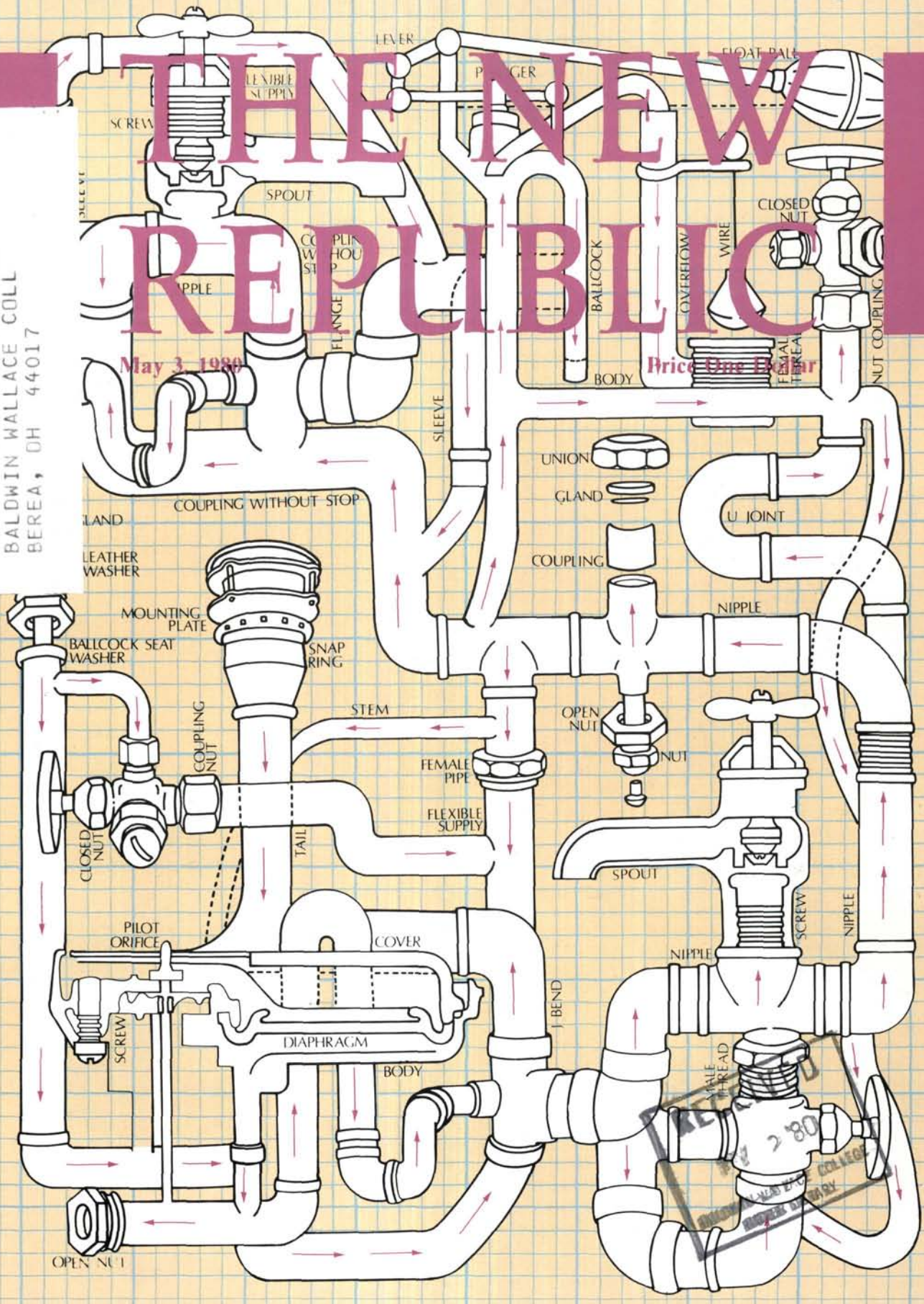

Coupling, Talese Style— *Barbara Grizzuti Harrison*

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Babies, Strikes and Compulsory Unionism Don't Mix.

Marlene Swanson, R.N., is a dedicated nurse who takes care of newborn babies, many of them premature, most of them black and Hispanic, and all of them in need, at a community hospital outside Providence, Rhode Island.

When an illegal strike was called, Marlene refused to join it. She crossed the picket line and reported to work because, as she says, "Nurses take the Hippocratic oath too, like doctors. I felt a moral responsibility to those infants."

Angry union officials immediately retaliated. Marlene, along with the other nurses at the hospital, had been forced to join the union to keep her job. This compulsory union membership, union officials claimed, made all nurses subject to fines for any disobedience of their decisions.

They charged Marlene Swanson with violating union by-laws, held a sham "trial," and fined her $250 for taking care of her infant patients during the strike. When Marlene appealed the fine to the union membership, they increased it to $300!

An undaunted Marlene refused to pay the fine, and the union took her to court. At first, she didn't know where to turn for the legal help she urgently needed. After all, she was just one member against the entire Rhode Island State Nurses Association.

Then she remembered reading about William F. Buckley, Jr.'s legal battle against a union, and called his office. She was referred to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which agreed to provide counsel.

A defense was prepared and presented so effectively that the union suggested the case could be settled out of court if Marlene would give the fine to charity. She flatly refused "because a lot of other nurses were watching to see what happened to me. I could not admit I was guilty of anything."

A judge of the Rhode Island Superior Court emphatically agreed, handing down a directed verdict against the union and for Marlene Swanson. Judge Clifford J. Cawley ruled that state public policy was quite clear that strikes by nurses were illegal, and that it is the "zenith of asininity" to fine anyone for failure to take part in an illegal strike.

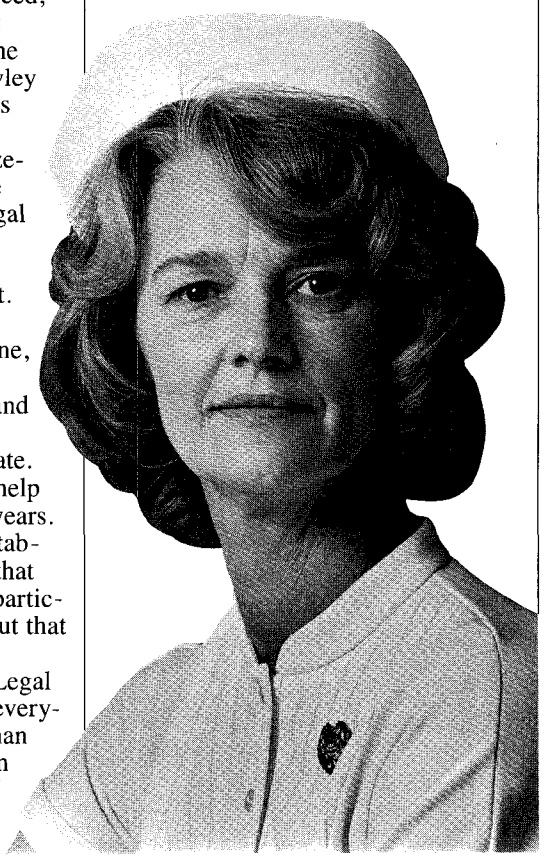
The importance of Marlene's victory became quickly apparent. When another illegal strike occurred at the hospital, not just one, but 18 nurses crossed the picket line, putting their patients first and their union second.

Marlene Swanson was fortunate. She received experienced legal help in a case that lasted nearly two years. She would not have won and established an important principle—that nurses cannot be compelled to participate in an illegal strike—without that expert legal assistance.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can—currently in more than 100 cases involving illegal union political spending, violations of academic and political freedom, union violence, and other abuses of basic employee rights.

If you'd like to help people like Marlene Swanson, we'd like to hear from you.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation
8001 Braddock Road
Springfield, Virginia 22160



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TRB

from Washington
May 3, 1980

On Coming Unstuck

I think I have never seen more confusion and uncertainty in Washington as we combine inflation, recession, and Iran with a presidential election. Foreigners often ask how we manage it. The Canadian government has distributed an admirable pamphlet, "How Canadians Govern Themselves," written by Eugene Forsey, a former senator in Ottawa, in which he makes some passing contrasts with Washington. He notes with wonder of our system that "it can happen, and often does, that the president belongs to one party while the opposing party has a majority in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, or both. . . . He cannot appeal to the people by dissolving either house, or both, he has no such power."

Amazing. In fact, if Reagan gets elected this November he will probably have a Democratic Congress confronting him with more stalemate. (If Carter gets reelected he'll be a lame duck president right from the start of his second term.)

Senator Forsey regards us with good will but natural wonder. His remarks, somewhat condensed, continue: "A president, accordingly, may have a coherent program to present to Congress. But each house can add to each of his bills, or take things out of them, or reject them outright, and what emerges from the tussle may bear little or no resemblance to what the president wanted. So when an election comes, the president, the senator, the representative, reproached with not having carried out his promises can always say, 'Don't blame me!' So it ends up that nobody—not the president, not the senators, not the representatives—can be held really responsible for anything done or not done. Everybody concerned can honestly and legitimately say it was not his fault. Our Canadian system is very different." Senator Forsey neglects to say how much nicer this is for all the politicians involved. (Write PO Box 1986, Station B, Ottawa, for free copies of the pamphlet.)

The complex ingenuities of our government awe not only foreigners but occasionally even Americans. Thirty years ago a prestigious 16-man committee of the American Political Science Association issued a unanimous 30,000-word report, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System," on which they had worked four years. Political parties, they asserted, "are now probably the most archaic institutions in the United States." As I read my yellowed abstract of the report, I reflect that parties today are more antique than ever.

"Lacking his party's support for a broad program, the president is left with only one course," warns the forgotten study. "He can attempt to fill the void caused by the absence of an effective party program. . . . It favors a president who exploits skillfully the arts of demagoguery . . . who does not mind turning into the embodiment of personal government."

Who did the professors have in mind as they denounced the danger of "personal government"? They were looking abroad, thinking of Hitler: "A generation ago" (i.e., 1930) "one might have dismissed this prospect as fantastic," but since then there had been bitter experiences "from recent and current examples": "Americans cannot afford to be casual about overextending the presidency to the point where it might very well ring in the wrong ending."

"Overextending the presidency"? What "wrong ending"? This was, of course, before Cambodia and Vietnam and Watergate; Richard Nixon had been in the House only four years. Yet the students were worried. The eminent chairman, E. E. Schattschneider of Wesleyan University, and the others proposed that each party establish a 50-member "party council" as a continuing body. Party inadequacy, they feared, might defeat "well-considered programs . . . and lead to grave consequences in an explosive era." It was a nice blueprint for columnists like Walter Lippmann to write pieces about. It had a lot of fine reforms. It has been forgotten for 30 years.

A lot of books come to mind as we reflect on the aftermath of the Pennsylvania primary last week. "A presidential system of government in which future chief executives need serve no apprenticeship in comparable office is a risky venture," observed political scientists William Keech and Donald Matthews in *The Party's Choice* (Brookings, 1976). Carter came to the White House with no previous experience in Washington; Ronald Reagan hasn't had any either. By contrast Margaret Thatcher served 20 years in parliament before becoming prime minister, Callahan 31 years, Winston Churchill 40. In short, a future prime minister has advanced through a protracted, muted struggle requiring cooperation from colleagues all along the way, and they finally pick him as their leader because they know him and can work with him. We don't operate that way; our system recently has put a premium on presidential candidates who are anti-Washington—proud outsiders; then, at the end, we're left to choose between two of them.

Surely these little quirks in America's system of government are not important in the long run? They wouldn't be, perhaps, if they were not combined with other oddities. Take, for example, the question of the deterioration of the world situation. It happened suddenly: a year ago we were on the point of ratifying the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II), we had "detente," we were the firm leader of the great NATO alliance. Then everything came unstuck. Craig R. Whitney, the *New York Times* bureau chief in Moscow, in a thoughtful piece on "The View From the Kremlin," keeps coming back to SALT. It was the "centerpiece of detente," he says, that Brezhnev and Carter signed in Vienna last June. "Prospects for American-Soviet ties improved right up to the Vienna summit." Then Moscow learned that SALT was in danger. "The Russians saw it all as a global conspiracy." The balance of forces in the Politburo shifted "away from caution toward assertiveness." When Afghanistan came up Moscow felt "the Russians had nothing to lose. . . . SALT II was dead anyway."

Who upset SALT? Just another provision in our Constitution. Out of a Congress of 535 members, 34 senators can kill a treaty. They may come from the smallest states. Their veto can kill it as it did the League of Nations 60 years ago. There was never any actual vote on SALT. The Senate just delayed action. And the roof fell in.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 182, No. 18, Issue 3408, May 3, 1980. Published weekly (except the issues of January 5, July 12, August 9, September 13) and distributed by The New Republic, Inc., 1220 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Phone (202) 331-7494. Single copy, $1.00; Yearly subscriptions, $28; foreign, $31; students, $17.

Copyright 1980 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISBN 0028-6583). Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide. The New Republic is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 3, 1980

What We See In Anderson

Independent candidacies are not rare in American politics, but successful ones are almost unheard of. Established political figures who embark on voyages outside the safe harbors of the established parties invite ridicule and abuse, as John Anderson is discovering. In Washington and elsewhere politicos gather, the two-party system is still received religion. Naturally its high priests denounce any heretic. But for President Carter and his advisers, Anderson's decision to turn his doomed quest for the Republican nomination into a genuine third option for the voters in November is more than just blasphemy. It is a direct and personal threat to Carter's incumbency. John White, the Democratic national chairman, and Robert Strauss, this administration's political enforcer, already are saying that Anderson is a spoiler and a kook. That will not be the worst you will hear about Anderson from frantic Carter partisans.

We welcome Anderson's entry in the general election. We are not ready to endorse him; his candidacy is still too unformed. But like millions of Americans, we are appalled at the prospect of having to choose between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. True, Reagan makes special ideological claims upon our combativeness. Few political figures in our time so perfectly embody the doctrine of the stone heart as does this hopeful from a party that has increasingly made that doctrine its special message. His canned lines, moreover, reveal a mind so primitive and simplistic in its understanding of complexity that we shudder to contemplate how that understanding might translate into economic and social policy. Reagan's now famous, and even acknowledged, casual attitude about what is and what is not fact confirms that he is someone for whom the stubborn sinews of reality place little limit either on rhetoric or on political intention. The prospect of a Reagan presidency is a nightmare which, unlike other nightmares, cannot be avoided by watching old movies on the late, late show.

Anderson's candidacy may help this nightmare come true. Polls suggest that right now he draws away votes equally from Carter and Reagan. But if Anderson turns out to be the kind of candidate we are hoping for, it is only logical to assume he will hurt the Democrat more, and could be the crucial factor that elects the Republican. Sadly, we face this risk with equanimity. It's not that there is no difference between Reagan and Carter. But there's not enough difference to be worth abandoning a third option that might be far preferable to either.

To be fair, we should remind you that *The New Republic* was not exuberant about Jimmy Carter in 1976. Our editorial endorsement ("For Carter, With Reservations," October 12, 1976) was at least as diffident and skeptical as any that appeared that year. Many subscribers thought it churlish. We wrote then that, given the choice between the two major party nominees, but not only because of that choice, we understood why some readers would conscientiously vote for the available independent candidate, Eugene McCarthy. A few of us did so ourselves, and do not regret it, even though we know that, if many other Democrats had done the same, Gerald Ford would still be president. That is, of course, a measure of desperation, considering that we celebrated his departure from office with a heartfelt "Good Riddance" (*TNR*, January 15, 1977).

Jimmy Carter has presided over such a dramatic decline in American well-being that, if ours were a parliamentary system, he would have been put out of office a dozen times by now. Yet Carter is nearly certain of renomination by the Democratic party. This is only because the candidate who pre-empted the opposition to Carter within the party suffers from perceived

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character defects that have virtually precluded a campaign on the issues and standards presidential aspirants ordinarily are judged by. If not for the rally-round-the-flag effect of Khomeini's aggressions against the US and Brezhnev's aggressions against the Afghanis, even Senator Kennedy's ample handicaps might not have preserved the party's nod for Carter.

Each morning's papers testify to the bankruptcy of Carter's stewardship; an inflation rate higher than at any moment in US history, undermining the stable middle class that has been our nation's distinctive strength; a deepening recession—casually projected as "mild" by the administration—with unemployment rising throughout the work force and welfare and relief payments dwindling in real terms; a dangerous hemorrhage of American wealth to the OPEC cartel—$90 billion this year alone—which can be ended only by the courage this president lacks to limit the import of oil and to ration supplies. While the general welfare declines, there has been no significant effort on behalf of the nation's poor and afflicted. A special concern for these people goes to the heart of what makes Democrats different from Republicans. Andrew Young's support cannot disguise Carter's betrayal of this special Democratic trust.

The domestic economy will sooner or later recover from the ill-fated ministrations of Carter's policy-makers. But we cannot be remotely so confident about the recuperative possibilities for the American position in world affairs. US foreign policy has never been in greater disarray. Economic cycles are relatively short. Historical cycles, if you believe in them, do not give great nations a second chance. There is nothing cyclical about the enterprise of achieving a balance of power and influence in the world that encourages other societies to choose freedom, or at least does not frighten them away from doing so. This has not always been the purpose of our foreign policy; sometimes it has seemed that we do precisely the opposite. But, on balance, American power has helped to sustain the democratic alternative to systems whose character may be judged best by the number of people willing to risk their lives escaping them. If that democratic alternative now appears less viable, it is because allies, neutrals, and adversaries now widely and justifiably perceive us to have forsaken our "heroic fidelity," as the pro-American British weekly *Spectator* wistfully put it, even to Western Europe. The oft-cited, probably also much exaggerated, post-Vietnam malaise and failure of will is partly responsible. But an especially incompetent and timid president, who is a stranger to coherent thinking, to deep convictions, and to the very idea of historical commitments, is even more to blame. Such a president can be an appeaser one day, a war-maker the next. The harm Jimmy Carter already has done to our system of alliances and to the expectation that we will be firm in defending our interests and principles, which means also the interests and principles of the people who depend on us, is incalculable. It is a permanent mortgage on the future.

Nothing that is said against Jimmy Carter constitutes, by itself, a case for John Anderson. But since Carter's boosters soon will be trying to panic the electorate into overlooking the Anderson candidacy entirely at the peril of electing Reagan, it is wise to keep the dismal record of this administration in focus. On the evidence, after all, Jimmy Carter is no life raft for an America that is sinking. There are still a few people who believe that all good things come from Democrats, and only good things, but even they must now suspect that Carter is hardly a real Democrat. John Anderson deserves our attention because he has put the parties on notice that their cartel against quality will cost them in votes come November. Political parties so indifferent to the seriousness of the present national crisis as to put forward two such unserious contenders deserve no less. One slightly sneaky reason for Democrats to encourage Anderson's independent candidacy is the hope that the Democratic convention will be frightened into changing its rules even at the penultimate moment in August and, in those vilified smoke-filled rooms, choose a nominee who could go to the country backed by a unified party. This means, of course, a candidate other than Ted Kennedy or the incumbent.

But Anderson's candidacy may also be judged favorably on its merits. At this point, surely, it is unfair to argue against Anderson that he can't win. That's the hoary argument trotted out every time someone bold bolts from the pack. If everyone who prefers Anderson, but worries that he can't win, votes for him anyway, it's possible that he could win. The early polls certainly have buoyed his supporters: around 20 percent of the electorate prefers him already. And how much more unpopular will Carter be three and six months hence? Have we so low an opinion of our fellow voters that we believe Reagan, with more exposure, will go up in the people's favor?

The critical contrast now is not between Carter and Reagan, but between the two of them and Anderson. The election of an independent would reflect and deepen the urgency of the political moment, and release the bottled-up creative energies of the system. It would be traumatic for the smug and the entrenched. So the liberating and transforming effect of a president chosen despite the parties cannot be underestimated.

(continued on page 8)

Salvation of Capitalism Postponed

Due to a brainworker's slowdown, part two of *TNR*'s editorial on productivity has been deferred.

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Correspondence

Gerald W. Johnson

To the editors:

I want to join in your tribute to Gerald W. Johnson. I first learned from him, and enjoyed his writing at the same time, in his very temperate and understanding *The Secession of the Southern States*.

That was nearly 50 years ago. Since then I have read most of his books, but his ablest and most pungent work always seemed to be that for *The New Republic*.

Frank E. Smith
Jackson, Mississippi

Monetary innocence

To the editors:

In the issue of March 22, TRB takes random shots at a variety of targets, hits none, and in the process further trivializes the political debate. He begins by implying that US energy use is simply a matter of excess driving, though cars use only 15 percent of the nation's energy. TRB also says budget deficits don't cause inflation simply because the late Arthur Okun said they don't. Then he digs up some old quotations from Ronald Reagan that were critical of involuntary Social Security and a graduated income tax. The implication is that enlightened persons cannot speak of such things. Yet a serious argument can be made that graduated taxes and indexed tax-financed pensions are potentially lethal to the economy, when combined with inflation and an aging population.

I don't know whether or not a graduated tax is immoral, but Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick makes a strong case in that direction. I don't know whether Social Security should have been voluntary, but the involuntary system certainly is in deep trouble. And any list of budget cuts sounds heartless if you don't look closely at who benefits and who pays. Most housing subsidies, for example, benefit the construction industry and unions, drive up housing prices, and distribute mortgage money to relatively well-off households.

Apparently, both TRB and Reagan once misunderstood the net flows of funds in and out of Washington. Washington clearly has no source of tax revenue to "share" except what it takes from people living in cities and states. Reagan's figures, from the Tax Foundation, refer only to grants-in-aid and revenue sharing, which are deceptively advertised as help for *all* cities and states when that is quite impossible. Every area that receives more in federal aid than it pays in federal taxes must be offset by an area that pays more than it receives. Reagan was quite right about that.

If TRB assumes that affluent areas help the impoverished through these programs, or that the federal government can help all areas by sharing borrowed or printed money, it is he and not Reagan who deserves to be called innocent.

Alan Reynolds, Vice President
The First National Bank of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Stop slandering Wagner

To the editors:

Let's stop slandering Wagner. Leon Wieseltier ("Syberberg's Hitler," *TNR*, March 8) holds Wagner responsible for Hitler and the atrocities of World War II. Wieseltier should know better. This canard is as immoral and dishonest as the slogan "Zionism equals racism."

"For centuries Germans awaited Parsifal and Parsifal appeared," writes Wieseltier. Wagner, far from proclaiming Germany the Aryan promised land, looked upon Germany as a cultural backwater, a land of prudery and fakery. This is why, when the last vestige of Europe's revolutionary wave hit Dresden in 1849, Wagner sacrificed his career as Royal Kapellmeister to join the anarchist Bakunin. Two of Wagner's revolutionary companions were arrested and executed. There is no question that Wagner would also have been executed if Liszt had not procured a forged passport and smuggled him out of Germany. Wagner lived in exile for 13 years.

As to Wieseltier's likening of Wagner to that "monstrous anti-Semite" Ezra Pound, the only evidence against Wagner is his article "Das Judenthum in der Musik." Few Wagnerphobes have read beyond the title: it is a strange but not anti-Semitic essay. Hermann Levi, conductor of the first production of *Parsifal*, sent a copy of "Judenthum" to his father, the Rabbi of Giessen, who gave it his approval. Levi resided at Wahnfried, Wagner's house in Bayreuth, along with *Parsifal's* scenic designer, costume maker, and producer—all Jews. Does that sound like the household of a rabid anti-Semite?

David Lasker
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

Opposing coercive apology

To the editors:

"Another Hand of Patience" (April 12) contains serious errors of judgment in suggesting that President Carter apologize to the government of Iran for past American misdeeds.

Whether or not American foreign policy was reprehensible, no government acting in its national interest can publicly apologize under coercive pressures. A president may choose at one time or another to openly express regret or sorrow for some past policy, but this occasional statement must always be made from free choice—not in order to satisfy a quid pro quo of a foreign government or terrorists. To submit to coercive apology would invite future blackmail.

Furthermore, it is incorrect to infer that a government is simply an aggregation of human beings asking the humble question, "Were we wrong?" In reality, a government is an organization with goals, functions, a past, and a future that transcends the sum of its human parts. What is admirable (or moral) for an individual, therefore, is not necessarily so for a government.

Finally, there is no evidence that offering an apology to the Iranian government will "alleviate the suffering of our hostage citizens by assuaging Iranian anger." To the contrary, there is reason to question the power of the present elected government to enforce its own policies concerning the hostages.

Richard D. Ross
New York, New York

Fact-checking

To the editors:

It is interesting to me that the very piece (TRB, April 5) that criticizes Ronald Reagan for not getting his facts straight, says that Arthur Laffer is the author of *The Way the World Works*. Jude Wanniski, not Arthur Laffer, is the author of that formidable work.

Joe Nesler
New Haven, Connecticut

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This would not depend on any imagined charismatic qualities of the candidate. In fact, there is something very attractive about Anderson's seemingly deliberate effort not to cultivate that cult of personality that usually develops around candidates who defy the orthodoxies. (Though there's something unattractive about the sanctimonious way he relishes his posture of defiance.)

John Anderson has a progressive sensibility, but he is no litmus test liberal. The Carter-Mondale people are busily scavenging through Anderson's record in search of evidence of past illiberality. Their choicest find so far is a constitutional amendment Anderson introduced in Congress in 1965, that read in part:

> Section 1. This Nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of nations, through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God. . .
>
> Section 3. Congress shall have power, in such cases as it may deem proper, to provide a suitable oath of affirmation for citizens whose religious scruples prevent them from giving unqualified allegiance to the Constitution, as herein amended.

Anderson has now disowned these idiosyncratic views on church and state; they will haunt him nonetheless. His past opinions and votes on many economic issues are not quite so idiosyncratic, but they also have been far from very liberal. Anderson, let's be honest, has been remaking himself at a rapid clip, and the pace has picked up in the course of his campaign for the presidency. This is a good reason for caution by those who like what they hear today, but it takes a lot of nerve for the Carter people to be raking through Anderson's past. What were Jimmy Carter's views in 1965 on church and state, on social welfare, on race?

Despite some uncertainty about his views, we can be confident that Anderson would bring to the presidency a thoughtful temperament and genuinely decent instincts. These traits, we believe, are now in short supply in and around the Oval Office.

Anderson's choice of vice president will tell us a lot about his programmatic intentions. It is reassuring, then, that Anderson has resisted the counsel of making a symbolic statement in his choice of a running mate: Barbara Jordan, for example, or Kingman Brewster, who might rally campaign volunteers but would add exactly nothing of substance to an Anderson administration. By contrast, Anderson's apparent preference, or that of his advisers, for Pat Moynihan or Mo Udall or Hugh Carey is a sign of great political seriousness. This suggests a reassuring openness to traditional liberal perspectives on bread and butter issues. It is not only a matter of equity; it is a matter of necessity if America's credibility as a major power is to be restored. A tough-minded strategy in foreign affairs cannot be sustained without generous and egalitarian instincts concretely expressed in domestic policies. The citizenry will not be willing to sacrifice for a society that enriches the few and keeps the multitudes in deep debt and deeper still in worries.

A shared appreciation of these matters is what we are looking for in John Anderson's candidacy. Of course Anderson could win in a landslide if all voters who are repelled by Carter and Reagan were to project their own particular beliefs onto him. For this reason a strategy of calculated ambiguity will be very tempting to Anderson. We hope he does not succumb. This former Republican's message needs to become more specific, not less so, in order to reassure Democrats, however disgruntled, that the chance of Anderson is worth the risk of Reagan.

Selling Out the Oil Reserve

Suppose secret evidence began leaking that when President Carter met with Brezhnev in Vienna, Brezhnev told Carter that within five years Soviet missiles would be numerous and accurate enough to destroy all US missiles. Suppose the evidence further showed that Brezhnev demanded that Carter do nothing to reduce US vulnerability or else the Soviet Union would threaten Berlin. Suppose congressional committees had evidence that Carter agreed to these terms, and cut back US strategic spending to demonstrate US "good faith." We suspect that there would be an ungodly uproar in Congress and in the press, that Carter's action would be a campaign issue, that the president would be questioned about his conduct incessantly, and that, in fact, his cravenness would be punished with total rejection at the polls.

Well, it appears that an analogous sell-out of America's national security interests *has* occurred, and although a few members of Congress are appropriately exercised about it, it's received comparatively little press attention. Only one newspaper, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, has conducted a major investigation, and the scandal has gone unmentioned on television. No one has seen fit to ask President Carter about it at a press conference. Even Carter's political opponents appear unaware of it, although we believe it embodies precisely what is worst about Carter leadership: lack of courage, strategic short-sightedness, and the subordination of foreign policy to domestic politics.

We refer to the Carter administration's decision last month, under pressure from Saudi Arabia, to forgo plans to fill up America's strategic petroleum reserve, our first line of defense against an oil embargo or other cutoff of Middle East oil supplies. According to the *Sun-Times* and congressional sources, the Saudis threatened to cut production by a million barrels a day if the United States resumed putting oil into its emergency stockpile, which currently contains only 92 million barrels, or about six days' worth at normal consumption rates. The Saudis threatened the production cutback even if the United States sought to use its own domestic

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supplies to fill the petroleum reserve. Saudi Arabia's obvious purpose was to maintain US dependence and vulnerability to an embargo. This ostensible US friend and ally engaged in blackmail of the rawest sort. And the Carter administration buckled. On February 4, Energy Secretary Charles Duncan told Congress that the administration planned to begin salting away oil at the rate of 200,000 barrels a day up to the reserve's capacity of 258 million barrels (about a month's supply). On March 5, Duncan announced that the reserve would not be filled, after all. What happened? Why, a Duncan trip to Saudi Arabia, where the ultimatum was delivered to him by Saudi oil minister Zaki Yamani. The administration will not openly admit to having submitted to blackmail, but we know that Yamani repeated his threats on a separate occasion to Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. Bradley's position, which should be the administration's position, is that "we should go do it (fill the reserve) because it's in our own national security interests."

Actually, that was once the administration's position. In April 1977, in his famous "moral equivalent of war" speech, Carter declared that "we must reduce our vulnerability to potentially devastating embargoes" and proposed a doubling of planned strategic reserve capacity—to one billion barrels, or a six-month supply—by 1985. As with so many other of his grand initiatives, Carter has stepped back from this one, too, with the United States less than one-tenth the way toward his former goal. Of the major countries of the world, according to research done by Thomas J. Moore of the *Sun-Times*, the United States has less of a petroleum reserve than any—six days, as compared to 58 for West Germany, 36 for Japan, and 90 days for France. This helps explain why the United States has been more bellicose than its allies in assessing threats to the Persian Gulf. In the event of an oil cutoff, contrary to conventional wisdom, we would be hurt first.

It is simply unconscionable for the Carter administration to leave this country so vulnerable and to sacrifice US national security interests to suit the will of a blackmailer. The administration has its excuses, but they sound phony. Among them: we are trying to balance the budget this year, and we can save one billion dollars by postponing additions to the petroleum reserve this year. This excuse would demonstrate terrible judgment even if it made economic sense. Of all the national security dangers now facing the US, an oil cutoff is certainly more likely than, say, an all-out Soviet nuclear attack on the US. If forced to choose between a billion for the MX missile and a billion for an oil reserve, we'd pick the oil anytime, and so should Carter. Another Carter excuse is adapted from Saudi Arabia's public justification for wanting us not to fill the reserves. That is: oil prices among the OPEC countries are not stable right now. Saudi Arabia is charging far less than its cartel partners, wants to get prices in line, and does not want us further destabilizing the market by buying extra quantities for our petroleum reserve. This argument simply does not hold water. Prices are unstable because there is a glut of oil on the market, making this the perfect time for the US to buy. Also, the 100,000 barrels per day the US planned to purchase on the open market represents just .3 percent of OPEC production; so we wouldn't be affecting the market at all. And finally, the way price stability is likely to return to the oil market is by an increase in the Saudi price, probably this June. At the same time, the Saudis probably will stop producing the extra one million barrels a day that they gave President Carter as an "independence day present" in 1979. So the Saudis will have carried out their threat anyway, and we still won't have oil in our reserve.

But the Saudis *will* have all the arms they want. Nothing they do, apparently, will cause us to cut off their supply. So while they prevent us from building up our strategic petroleum reserve we continue to provide them with strategic overkill in weapons. Twenty-two billion dollars in undelivered US military construction and arms is already scheduled for Saudi Arabia. More is on the way, including probably the E-3A AWACS, the most important piece of aircraft we possess. How craven can we be?

President Carter's policy seems based on the fear of gas lines in an election year and the fear of Saudi reprisals if the US serves its national interest. We think it is another example of why Carter should be a one-term president.

Welfare Chiselers

If any politician were to propose to drastically slash benefits, he would be denounced almost universally as cruel, and quite possibly voted out of office at the first opportunity. No one, of course, has proposed any such thing. But in recent years inflation has badly eroded the value of welfare payments in many states, and many of the nation's poor have been forced to subsist on much less than what they got six years ago. In New York City, the maximum allowance for a family of four in 1974 was $476 per month. In 1980 it is still $476 per month. During that same period, prices have risen by 72 percent. Nor is New York unusual. Any number of states silently reduced their welfare benefits between 1974 and 1978, including Georgia (33 percent), Texas (30 percent), New Jersey (18 percent), Oregon (17 percent), and Pennsylvania (16 percent). One bright spot is that federal food stamps, unlike most state welfare programs, are indexed to the consumer price index, and thus have mitigated the effects of these cuts. But the erosion has been aggravated by even greater reductions in Medicaid benefits. In Pennsylvania Wisconsin, for example, the Medicaid benefits available to children on welfare fell by 47 percent between 1973 and 1976. As Leonard J. Hausman, a Brandeis econo-

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mist, put it in a recent Senate hearing, "Real welfare benefits are in stark retreat."

Welfare payments vary drastically from state to state. A family of four in Hawaii is eligible for $7884 in annual benefits from food stamps and the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which amounts to 96 percent of what the government defines as the poverty level. In Mississippi the same family would get only $3540 in benefits. A family in Texas gets $1400 less than an identical family across the border in Oklahoma. This means that taxpayers in different states also shoulder an unequal share of the burden of helping those in need. Lynn Cutler, vice chairperson of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Responsibility, says that in California, welfare takes 2.19 percent of total state personal income—10 times the proportion in New Mexico.

Clearly this is no way to help the poor, and clearly some changes ought to be made—and quickly. President Carter has made some admirable efforts to revamp the nation's welfare system, but with only limited success. His initial welfare reform package proved too ambitious for Congress, which roundly rejected it. A second, more modest plan also failed. But last November the House narrowly approved the latest administration bill, which represents a big step toward making welfare simpler, fairer, and more humane.

The Carter plan has three main components. First, it requires all states to provide AFDC benefits that, combined with food stamps, would guarantee each family a minimum income of 65 percent of the poverty level (which of course is adjusted periodically for inflation). Thirteen states now fall below that standard. Second, it requires all states to provide welfare to all two-parent families with children when the usual breadwinner is unemployed. Twenty-four states now withhold benefits from such families. In these states, there is a direct incentive for an unemployed father to leave home, since his family can't qualify for AFDC benefits with him around. Third, it shifts a greater share of the welfare burden to the federal government, which would increase its contributions to state-run programs by $900 million.

In the House debate on the administration proposal, opponents offered four principal criticisms: it costs too much; it establishes a guaranteed annual income; it increases the federal government's responsibility for welfare, at the expense of the states; and it contains no tough work requirement. These charges came close to derailing the bill in the House, and they have assured that the Senate will take no action until next year—if then.

The cost of this program actually is pretty modest. Right now the federal government spends about $16.5 billion on all welfare programs. Under the administration bill the cost would rise to $18.9 billion—an increase of $2.4 billion. In a $600 billion budget, that increase hardly will be noticed. For comparison's sake, the first Carter proposal would have raised federal costs by $20 billion.

It is true, however, that this bill would establish a guaranteed minimum income for some of the poor, and that it would turn over more of the responsibility for welfare to the federal government. These are two good reasons why the bill should be enacted. There is no sense whatever in penalizing poor people because they live in Mississippi and not in Hawaii, or in letting New Mexico's taxpayers off easy at the expense of those in California. The federal government already has established certain minimum benefit levels, in food stamps and the program to assist the aged, blind, and disabled. These programs acknowledge that the problem of helping the poor is of equal gravity in every state, and Carter's welfare program extends the logic. But if the federal government imposes uniform federal standards on the states, then naturally it also is going to have to take over a bigger share of the costs. If the federal government were wholly responsible for paying for welfare—as we think it should be—then taxpayers across the country all would pay an equal share. As it is, they pay grossly unequal shares, which is an invitation for the states to compete in miserliness.

The question of how tough the federal work requirement should be took up much of the House debate, but it is probably the least important issue at stake. As Democrat Wyche Fowler of Georgia pointed out, it affects only a tiny proportion of people getting federal help. Nearly 15 million Americans receive benefits under AFDC or supplemental security income. Half of these are children. Four million qualify because they are old, blind, or disabled. Only three and a half million recipients are adults in AFDC families, and in 80 percent of these families the father is absent. Of the mothers affected, one in four is either working or looking for work. The work requirement would not apply, we are glad to note, to children, the elderly, the blind, the disabled, or the mothers with young children. It applies only to those parents in one-parent families with children over six years old and to one parent in all two-parent families. These recipients would have to register for employment with the federal Work Incentive program (WIN) and to accept any job offered. Anyone refusing a job would lose his or her benefits. That sounds tough enough.

The problem, as always, is enforcement. Anyone who really wants to make a career out of welfare can probably manage to do so. Eliminating such fraud would take an army of enforcers to prevent it, and it probably would cost as much as it would save. The best way to discourage fraud is to make working more profitable than not working. This bill contains provisions, such as an increase in the earned income tax credit, which will encourage people on welfare to work. Under this program, no welfare recipient who takes a job will find himself worse off financially than if he had refused it.

This bill is no panacea. The minimum benefit levels,

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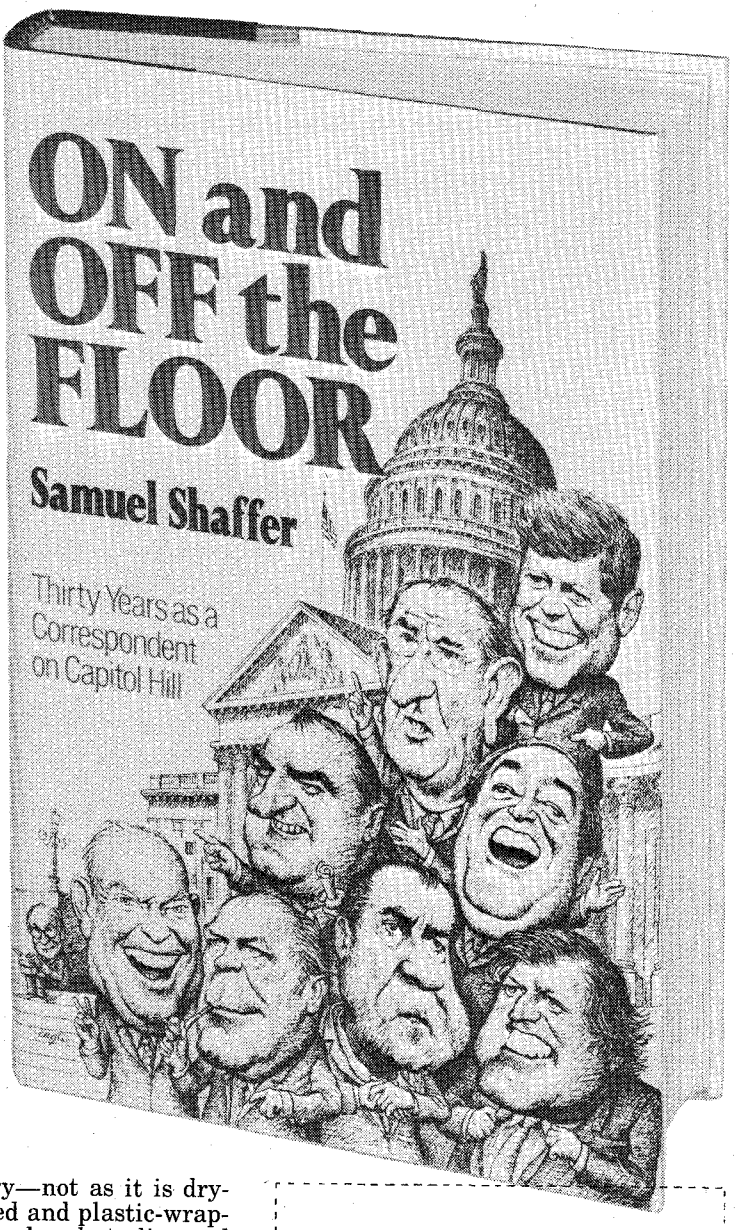

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most notably, are too low. But it goes a long way toward the type of welfare system the country needs. The progress it has achieved on this piece of legislation is one accomplishment the administration deserves to be proud of. But the Senate can take no pride that it so far has refused to enact this most modest of welfare reforms.

On the Hill

A Trucking Truce

No one ever said it would be easy to deregulate the American trucking industry, and they were right. The process has been slow, uncertain, and often painful. It began in 1975 when President Ford unveiled a bill to promote competition in commercial truck traffic. That effort was easily beaten back by an opposition composed of a Democratic Congress, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Teamsters Union, and the regulated trucking industry. It was taken up by the Carter administration in 1977, but languished for two years while the administration concentrated on an easier deregulation fight—the airline industry. Finally last summer President Carter and Senator Kennedy, in a gesture of pre-campaign solidarity, joined forces to propose a comprehensive bill for the trucking industry. Slowly the effort has worked its way through the legislative process. Recently the Senate passed a truck deregulation measure that the House is likely to approve, but with enough flaws that it may turn out to be worse than the status quo.

That is only one of the paradoxes visible in the battle over truck deregulation. Another is the conduct of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which since 1935 has been responsible for regulating commercial trucking in the US, and which for the better part of those 45 years has concerned itself mainly with protecting the companies it is supposed to regulate from the hazards of ordinary competition. As a result, the industry has prospered. By the estimate of the Federal Trade Commission, regulated trucking firms are nearly 50 percent more profitable than the average manufacturing company. The industry of course disputes that estimate.

But in the last three years the ICC has stopped acting like the servant of the trucking industry, and started acting like its master. Credit for this goes to the new chairman appointed in 1977 by President Carter, Daniel O'Neal, a longtime advocate of greater competition who proceeded cautiously to put his ideas into practice. Under O'Neal the ICC began by taking a few steps toward deregulating the industry—speeding up decisions on applications, granting almost all requests for operating certificates (97 percent at last count), and shifting the burden of proof from those applying for the right to serve certain markets to those who oppose granting it.

But both O'Neal and the White House held back from really pressing the fight, mainly because the administration wanted to get an airline deregulation bill passed first. The thinking was that airline deregulation would be easier to get through Congress, and that a success there would make Congress more amenable to a trucking bill. The administration also knew the chances of getting the trucking industry deregulated were not terribly good. "A comprehensive bill will be very hard to get," one White House official told me in 1978. "This will make airline deregulation look like a tea party." But once the airlines had been taken care of, the administration pressed ahead on two fronts—in Congress and at the ICC. First it agreed on a joint bill with Senator Kennedy, who had led the fight on airline deregulation and was eager to do likewise on trucking. While Kennedy wrestled unsuccessfully with Senator Howard Cannon of Nevada over whether Kennedy's antitrust subcommittee or Cannon's commerce committee would have jurisdiction over the bill, the ICC proceeded with its own agenda. It came up with two proposals that enraged the commercial trucking firms. The first was to propose "master certificates" that would allow the holder to handle virtually any shipments he could find within specified areas. In an industry where licensed carriers are usually restricted on such minutiae as the commodities they can haul, the cities they can serve, and even the highways they must use, this proposal had an earth-shaking impact. But that wasn't all. The second drastic measure was a decision not to grant future rate increases solely on the basis of cost increases. Instead the ICC said it also would consider a trucking firm's rate of return on investment and on equity, which threatened future rate increases. The ATA said the decision could drive hundreds of operators into bankruptcy.

While everyone in the industry was howling about these atrocities, the ICC took the opportunity to propose some other changes that had once looked radical but paled next to these, such as allowing carriers to raise or lower rates (within certain limits) without approval by either the regional rate bureaus (made up of industry representatives) or the ICC, and allowing trucks to pick up shipments anywhere on their authorized routes, without specific ICC approval. O'Neal left in December, to be replaced by Darius Gaskins, who is even keener on deregulation.

It was the master certificates and the rate rollback, however, that broke the back of the industry's opposition to a deregulation bill. It also spurred Congress into doing something. "The problem is we've got a runaway ICC," says a trucking industry lobbyist. "We feel we have to have legislation to put these guys back on the track."

But there's the rub. If there was anything worse than having the ATA and the Teamsters fighting

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deregulation, it may be having them endorsing it. The bill approved by the Senate on April 15 (by a 70-20 vote) would have been a good bill five years ago; in fact in some respects it goes further than the Ford bill. Cannon's bill does several commendable things. It removes the antitrust immunity of the rate bureaus for most shipments as of 1983, thus making their routine price-fixing illegal. It formally shifts the burden of proof in application proceedings, requiring existing firms to show that the proposed service is inconsistent with the "public convenience and necessity" (the traditional ICC standard). It creates a free-pricing zone, allowing truckers to raise or lower rates by 10 percent. And it slightly expands the list of "exempt" commodities, which are subject to no federal regulation.

But all this is considerably less than what the industry needs, and what the ICC would achieve if left to its own devices. If this bill becomes law, truckers who want to enter new markets still will have to apply for the right to do so, in each case showing that they will serve the "public convenience and necessity." Under the ICC's proposal, they would have been able to get master certificates allowing them to handle business without specific ICC approval. The Cannon bill also retains antitrust immunity for those rates set by two or more firms handling shipments jointly. The price-fixing by rate bureaus will remain legal until 1983, where the ICC would have phased it out right away.

At this point everyone expects Congress to have a bill approved by sometime in June. House Commerce Committee chairman James Howard, once an adamant foe of deregulation, has promised the administration quick action on the Senate bill. The ATA says it will press two fights in the House that it lost in the Senate—to maintain antitrust immunity for rate bureaus and to remove the expanded list of exempt commodities. There its chances are somewhat better, partly because it and the Teamsters Union have members in nearly every House district. Those organizations that have favored deregulation all along—which include everyone from Ralph Nader's Congress Watch to a number of large shippers to the American Conservative Union—say there is some hope that the House-Senate Conference Committee will go a bit further than either the Senate or the House.

Even if the conference committee leaves the bill in its current mild form, it's probably better than no bill. In the short run, it would be better simply to let the ICC go ahead and deregulate the industry on its own. In the long run, however, it probably is wiser to have a deregulatory law in place, even a timid one like this. For one thing, it may pave the way for further measures two or three years hence, by which time the benefits of deregulation—lower prices, better service, greater competition—should be apparent, and the disasters once predicted by the industry—higher prices, worse service, and general chaos—should have failed to materialize. But more important is the need to protect against the ICC reverting to its traditional role as the industry's best friend. Under a president who favors deregulation, it was possible to introduce competition by appointing new commissioners who favored it. But under a president who opposes deregulation (such as Ronald Reagan, who said on one occasion he didn't think much of it), it also would be possible to stack the ICC in favor of less competition. This bill should make it impossible for the ICC to take the trucking industry back to the protected environment it used to enjoy, and for that reason alone it's better than nothing.

Stephen Chapman

Politics

Anderson's Tall Order

I've got some great news for John Anderson. Walter Cronkite, one of the people Anderson and his staff would most like to see as Anderson's running mate, just might do it. When I asked Cronkite on the phone what he thought about the ruminations in the Anderson camp, he said: "Well, I don't know. I haven't been asked. (Pause) I'd like to be asked before I said anything. (Pause) I'd be so honored to be asked, I wouldn't turn it down. (Pause) It would be the right party. I've been an independent all my life. I don't have any political ambition, and I have considerable doubt about what I could bring to such a ticket. I don't have any great confidence that he's got much of a chance with or without me, but I admire what he's doing." Cronkite said he is suspicious of politicians and others who try to profit by association with him, but said he would never suspect Anderson of such a thing. "I admire Anderson very much. He's brought a fresh breeze to the scene."

Anderson's fortunes have been brightening of late. He managed to get only a one percent write-in vote in Pennsylvania's Republican primary, but the other results there were very good for him. The voters demonstrated massive dissatisfaction with probable nominees Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, bolstering the logic of Anderson's independent candidacy. And the Pennsylvania results kept George Bush alive as a challenger to Reagan and Edward Kennedy as a rival of Carter, insuring that both front runners will continue to have their flaws exposed for all the world to see, and from within their own parties.

Anderson's independent candidacy has been further buoyed of late by poll results demonstrating national dismay with the likely major party nominees and showing surprising strength for Anderson himself. In late March, a Yankelovich poll showed that 58 percent of the public was unhappy about a Carter-Reagan choice. A *New York Times* poll in mid-April showed similar results and indicated that among these

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dissatisfied voters, Anderson was a slight favorite. Meanwhile, the April Gallup poll showed that in a three-way race, Anderson would get 21 percent to 39 for Carter and 34 for Reagan. Yankelovich, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* all showed roughly similar results: this relatively obscure Illinois congressman, a nationally-known figure for only three months and winner of not a single 1980 primary, stands only 15 points behind the incumbent president of the United States and the presumptive Republican nominee, a former California governor who has been running for president since 1968.

The question, of course, is whether Anderson can close that 15-point gap and become a truly viable presidential contender. He has a favorable public image going for him, along with voter dissatisfaction with the alternatives and rising independent-mindedness in the electorate. But he has much more going against him: the unhappy history of third-party candidacies, the problem of gaining access to ballots in the various states, and the major-party bias of federal campaign funding laws. And then Anderson has particular political weaknesses of his own: his narrow base of support, his lack of an experienced organization, and the absence of a real campaign strategy. There is a kind of chicken-egg conundrum at work with the Anderson campaign. Anderson has a chance to get elected president if he can attract money, attention, endorsements, and a popular following. To do that, of course, he has to demonstrate that he has a chance of getting elected.

Without rehashing history back to Teddy Roosevelt and forward again to George Wallace and Gene McCarthy, the fact that third-party or independent candidates have done so badly in the past weighs heavily on the Anderson campaign. Democratic and Republican spokesmen will say it again and again: "Third parties never win. Don't waste your vote. Don't get involved in a losing cause." Lots of voters and potential workers will buy the argument unless Anderson can convince them he has a chance.

Another order of historical argument goes as follows: at this stage of the election process, voters (and especially high-income, high-education, high-principled snobs) are *always* dissatisfied with the major-party choices (even when those choices turn out to be pretty good in hindsight, such as Truman-Dewey, Kennedy-Nixon, Humphrey-Nixon). According to this reasoning, now is the high point of Anderson's appeal, and everything will be downhill once the nominating process is over and the focus tightens on Reagan vs. Carter. The danger, it will be said, is that Anderson may peel away enough votes from one major candidate to elect the other, and this argument will be used to scare would-be defectors away from Anderson and back to their traditional parties. To counteract these arguments, Anderson can show poll results indicating that he draws support equally away from both Reagan and Carter. But what he really has to demonstrate is that Carter and Reagan really are the disastrous, dangerous choices that they appear to be now, and that he, Anderson, will be better. This will not be easy, but he will have assistance from Reagan and Carter: history may hurt Anderson, but the odiousness of contemporary reality will probably help him.

Anderson is settled in his mind that the country deserves an alternative to Carter and Reagan. But his major problem is still getting on the ballot in enough states to give him a chance of winning the required 270 electoral votes. Anderson's political strategy, such as it is, is based on polls showing Anderson even with Carter and slightly trailing Reagan in the West. This leads Anderson strategists to think they have a chance to carry California, Washington, Oregon, and maybe Colorado, for a start of 67 electoral votes. The same polls show Anderson doing respectably in the East, less well in the Midwest, and hopelessly in the South. Other target states would be New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, and Wisconsin, which would bring Anderson up to 144 electoral votes. He still would need 126, which he would have to fish for in the major industrial states of Illinois (26), Michigan (21), New Jersey (17), Pennsylvania (27), and Ohio (25), which total 116; and in Hawaii (4), Iowa (8), Minnesota (10), Rhode Island (4), and the District of Columbia (3). This is neither a traditional Democratic election strategy, which usually includes Texas and the Southeast, nor a Republican strategy, which includes the Midwest, West, and the South. The Anderson people will be only too glad to tell you who successfully put together a coalition of states like this: Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

To get on the ballot in these states, there are three major hurdles. One is organizational: knowing when deadlines are, how many signatures are required on petitions, and getting them. This sounds easy enough, but the crack law firm of Arnold and Porter, which Anderson is retaining at high cost to fight his ballot-access problems for him, is finding that secretaries of state in some states are slow to respond with facts for the Anderson campaign and are unclear in their interpretations. In Massachusetts, for example, one reading of the state election law holds that petitions must include the name of a presidential elector from each congressional district in the state, but Massachusetts election officials say the law is more flexible. A second set of problems are state laws designed to discourage third-party candidates—either early-filing deadlines (such as Ohio's, March 20, or Colorado's, April 29) or restrictions against independent candidates who have previously run in party primaries, as in California and Illinois. To have any hope of amassing enough delegates to win the election, Anderson's lawyers will have to fight these restrictions.

And finally, Reagan and Carter, together with state Republican and Democratic officials, almost certainly will put every possible roadblock in Anderson's way if he begins to appear a real threat, challenging petition

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The Tip O'Neill Option

Under the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the electoral votes cast to be chosen by the Electoral College. In 1980 one of the candidates will have to carry enough states to accumulate at least 270 electoral votes. What happens if a third-party candidate siphons off enough votes to deprive either major-party candidate of an Electoral College majority?

The Twelfth Amendment provides the answer. A special session of the House of Representatives would be convened in January. House members would caucus by state, and each state delegation would cast a single vote for president. The candidate who received the largest number of votes would be elected, provided the winner received an absolute majority of the 50 votes cast.

Twice in the nation's history the House of Representatives has decided a presidential election. The first time was in 1801, after Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr tied with 73 electoral votes each in the election of 1800. The House chose Jefferson by a vote of 10 states to four when Alexander Hamilton, the most powerful figure in the nascent Federalist party, persuaded his allies in the House to vote for Jefferson. Burr, of course, never forgave Hamilton, and the enmity between the two men grew so intense that Burr ended up killing his rival in a duel three years later.

In 1824, four powerful independent candidates ran for president and divided the electoral vote among them. Andrew Jackson finished first with 99 electoral votes, 15 more than his nearest opponent, John Quincy Adams. Despite Jackson's plurality in the Electoral College, Adams had more powerful friends in the House. When the state congressional delegations caucused in January 1825, Adams received 13 votes to Jackson's seven and was elected president. Jackson was forced to wait another four years for the White House.

In 1981, the House of Representatives will still have a Democratic majority. If the 1980 election were decided in the House, members could be expected to vote solidly for the Democratic candidate in a three-man field. But consider these complications.

Of today's major presidential contenders—Carter, Kennedy, Reagan, Bush, and Anderson—only the latter two have ever been elected to the House of Representatives. Bush served there for only four years. Anderson has served for 20, and has been a member of the Republican leadership for the last 12. Anderson is widely respected by House members on both sides of the aisle, and would be a formidable opponent if the election were decided by his colleagues in the House rather

signers and entering lawsuits to defend anti-independent state laws. Anderson can be expected to mount a national publicity campaign against such tactics, but his first line of defense will have to be a large, efficient organization in each of the key states, capable of gathering valid petitions in sufficient quantity to defeat any challenge. So far it's not clear he has such an organization.

Money should be the least of Anderson's problems. He will not get the $29 million in federal money that the major party candidates will receive. Nor will he have the $4.5 million that each national party will be able to spend to help its nominee, nor the unlimited funds that state party organizations can spend on voter registration, headquarters, and bumper stickers. Still, Anderson has a loyal following of nearly 100,000 contributors who tend to be above-average in income. If he can double the number of donors and collect an average of $40 from each—as he did during the primary campaign—he would have eight million dollars to start. It ought to be possible to stage major fundraising events to bring that up to the total of $10 to $15 million that he thinks he needs to stage an effective campaign. Anderson's traveling probably will be cut back to spare expenses. Tentative Anderson strategies call for him to concentrate on developing ideas to show he can solve the nation's problems and communicating those ideas in carefully targeted major speeches.

But key questions still need to be answered: what is Anderson going to say, who is he going to say it to, and is anybody going to listen? It's now clear to Anderson, his campaign manager Michael MacLeod, and to other Anderson strategists that they made a major mistake in the primaries by failing to broaden Anderson's base of support from the suburbs and college campuses into blue-collar and black constituencies, where the votes are. As the primary campaign wore on, in fact, Anderson seemed to be increasingly identified with easy abortions, gun control, opposition to the draft, and other trendy causes and less concerned about the economic woes of the ordinary citizen. Even though Anderson has challenging moderate-to-conservative ideas about inflation, energy, and productivity, he has allowed himself to look more and more like an intellectual clone of George McGovern or John Lindsay. It didn't help when Anderson became the darling of fundraiser Stewart Mott and actor Paul Newman.

Anderson now faces some difficult tasks on top of all the others. Instead of emphasizing "the Anderson difference," "new politics," or "new coalitions," Anderson plans now to build "a campaign of national unity" by trying to gather around him as many high-quality Democrats and moderate Republicans as possible, and then declaring that this group is capable of solving the nation's problems. The chicken-egg problem arises here, though. The more high-powered the names he attracts, the more electable he becomes; but to attract the names, he needs to seem electable.

Who, for example, will Anderson find for a running mate if Cronkite doesn't do it? Anderson says he would look for a moderate Democrat, but it is not clear who would be willing to bolt his party to join Anderson. Without being asked, Daniel Patrick Moynihan refused

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than by the general electorate.

In addition, funny things happen to the large Democratic majority in the House when the members are divided into state delegations. Even though two-thirds of the members of the House are Democrats, only a little more than half of the state delegations have a Democratic majority. In 12 states Republican congressmen outnumber Democrats, and in nine other states the number of Republicans and Democrats is the same. A shift of as few as 14 seats in the next Congress could give the Republican party control of more than half of the state delegations, even though the Democrats presumably will maintain their overall edge.

So suppose Anderson won the support of three or four state delegations in the House. This conceivably could be enough to deny either of the major-party candidates an absolute majority of the 50 votes needed for election. If Carter won the votes of 24 state delegations, Reagan 23, and Anderson three, who then would be president?

Enter the Twentieth Amendment. This obscure provision was enacted in 1933 to move up the presidential inauguration date from March 4 to January 20. But the amendment also authorized Congress to pass a law declaring who should act as president if the House of Representatives could not select a winner by the start of the new presidential term.

Congress did precisely that by enacting the Presidential Succession Act of 1948. Under that law, the Speaker of the House becomes president if the House has failed to elect a successor when the incumbent president's term expires on January 20. The Speaker acts as president "until the expiration of the then current Presidential term," or until the deadlock in the House is broken and a new president is chosen by a majority of the 50 state delegations.

A strong showing by independent candidate John Anderson on election day coupled with a close race between the Republican and Democratic nominees could result in a spectacle that American voters have not witnessed in a century and a half—the election of a president in the politically charged House of Representatives. Would John Anderson fare better than expected among his peers in the House? Would congressional antipathy toward President Carter spell an end to his chances in the House? And most intriguing of all, would fanciful thoughts dance through the white-thatched head of the Speaker of the House, 67-year-old Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., were he to realize that a deadlock on the House floor would result in his own elevation to the presidency?

Lawrence White

Lawrence White was formerly a legislative assistant in the United States Senate and is now a Washington attorney.

last week. Other names under discussion include Hugh Carey, Peter Rodino, and Morris Udall. Of these, Udall is personally closest to Anderson, but the problem is that he appears politically closest, too—another leftish liberal. If Anderson cannot find a practicing politician to join him, some advisers think he ought to look at others outside politics. Others include Yale University president A. Bartlett Giamatti, who might win some Italian votes, and Duke university president Terry Sanford.

Anderson also is seeking to establish credibility by naming advisory committees of distinguished experts. Possibilities are investment banker Felix Rohatyn, economist Henry Kaufman, labor expert Theodore Kheel, and former university president Milton Eisenhower. As yet, Anderson has not even begun concocting a foreign policy advisory list.

Beyond names, Anderson has to broaden his popular base. Anderson says that to attract blue-collar support he plans to hammer at Reagan's positions—his opposition to federal health and safety standards, welfare programs, and permissiveness toward oil companies and other industries—and at Carter's record. He says he also will pay more visits to union halls and working-class neighborhoods to explain how his economic proposals will help produce jobs and reduce inflation.

Altogether, what confronts Anderson is not just a tall order, but a giant one, requiring a campaign master plan as bold and shrewd as any seen in American political history. Shrewder, in fact, because what Anderson is aiming to pull off has never been done before. Once he decides on such a plan, he will need a masterful organization to execute it. At the moment, he has neither such a plan nor such an organization. Anderson has hired David Garth, the well-known New York campaign consultant, but Anderson says that Garth's primary assignment will be advertising. Anderson and MacLeod, formerly Anderson's chief congressional assistant, plan to supervise overall strategy and organization themselves. Some campaign insiders question whether either of them is up to the monumental job ahead, and cite multiple failures of both strategy and execution during the primary campaign to back up their case.

For example, Anderson started his GOP campaign with a four-state strategy, hoping that victories in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Wisconsin would somehow propel him to national victory. In the process, Anderson failed to field delegate candidates in most districts in New York and Illinois, which he might have carried, or to get himself entered in the Pennsylvania beauty contest, which he might well have won. Anderson managed to establish his distinctiveness as a candidate, but his organization reportedly lacked the internal communications to deliver warnings to the top that Anderson was sliding too far left and undermining his own base of support. And when Anderson hit upon a good idea in a speech in one location, the organization was not resilient enough to use it to win support elsewhere. The proof of Anderson's organizational problems is in the election results. He came from nowhere to finish just 1200 votes short of winning the Massachusetts primary and 700 votes short of winning in Vermont. But then he failed to capitalize on his

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notoriety in Illinois, Wisconsin, or anywhere else.

Maybe John Anderson can do better as an independent, but he is going to have to do a lot better against even greater odds. Considering the alternatives, I have to wish him well.

Morton Kondracke

Why these coarse jeremiads?

An Open Letter

Dear Mr. Solzhenitsyn:

I have spent the last few weeks absorbed by your book *The Oak and the Calf* (Harper & Row, $15.95), now translated into English. It is a massive outpouring of memory in which you describe your struggle with the Soviet commissars during the 1960s and early 1970s to print your work, to speak your thoughts. Especially remarkable is your portrait of Aleksandr Tvardovsky, the poet who served as editor of the "liberal" cultural journal *Novy Mir*, a man who befriended you, was eager to publish your work, yet, as himself a candidate-member of the Communist Central Committee, tried to keep your heterodoxy within "acceptable" limits. He was, as you say, a writer trapped between "his dossier and his soul." This is a great and tragic portrait, and it bears the signature of that splendid writer—the author of *The First Circle* and the series on the Gulag—whom I have strongly admired.

Yet there is one strand in your book, perhaps minor in your eyes, that troubles me. It troubles me because it violates the past of a group of American intellectuals among whom I count myself, and you will surely understand this for you have shown a strong concern with the historical past as it affects one's sense of oneself.

Repeatedly in your recent writings you make scattershot attacks on "Western intellectuals" for their subservience to the Soviet Union. You attack them for not protesting the outrages of the slave labor camps, for perpetuating illusions about the "progressive" character of the communist dictatorship.

That there has been a significant—though in recent years declining—segment of Western intellectuals about whom this is true, I would not deny. But there are other Western intellectuals. There are other liberals and democratic socialists, the sort whom you now dismiss with that abundance of scorn that is one of your gifts as a writer but flaws as a man. And *we*, the others, have not been silent about the scandals of the camps, the outrage of the dictatorship.

If you were to look half as carefully into the history of American intellectual life as you ask us to look into the history of Russian intellectual life, you would learn that in the last four or five decades it was mostly, though not of course only, intellectuals of the anti-communist left (all varieties, though not more numerous than those among the Christians), who fought desperately hard to tell the truth about the Stalin dictatorship and its heirs.

Indeed, as I recall from my own youth, in the 1930s and 1940s there were large segments of the American public—including many conservatives of the sort who have recently become your intellectual allies—who took a very kindly view of "Uncle Joe" and his regime. There were, as they noticed happily, no strikes under Stalin, and there was no end of the "discipline" they thought they wanted.

Among the first accounts of the Siberian slave camps were those of Anton Ciliga and Victor Serge, men of the independent left. One of the major scholarly works about the camps came from Solomon Schwartz, a Menshevik of the sort toward whom you are habitually contemptuous. In Europe the most persistent critics of the communist dictatorship were such writers of the anti-communist left as Silone, Orwell, and Koestler.

So when I read in *The Oak and the Calf* that "those very same Western public figures who were outraged by individual executions anywhere else applauded when Stalin shot hundreds of thousands," I want to protest this gross simplification. Long before you—I repeat, long before you—there were in the West intellectuals of the left who not only were "outraged by individual executions anywhere else" but also spoke vehemently "when Stalin shot hundreds of thousands." We were opponents of every dictatorship, Hitler's and Stalin's, as later of Pinochet's and Castro's.

The point I am making here somewhat narrowly could easily be extended to your recent grand pronouncements about the decay of Western will, its lack of moral fiber in resisting communism, etc. It is easy enough to indulge in such sweeping jeremiads; it is far more difficult to make or propose specific decisions in the world political struggle. Would it have been right or good or advantageous to send troops to Angola? What, if anything, could the Western powers have done about Afghanistan? How adjust military to political measures? How, above all, relate the containment of communist power to a coexistence that would enable us to avoid a nuclear war certain to destroy large portions of humanity? These questions you do not confront; they seem to be beneath your notice; it is easier to declaim.

You have begun to do, with regard to Western liberals and democratic socialists, a little of what you objected to in the Soviet treatment of dissident writers. Of course, you cannot, nor do you wish to, put us in camps or psychiatric hospitals. But your intellectual treatment is coarse. You dispose of us wholesale. You refuse elementary distinctions. You write not from knowledge, but from rage.

How important is all this? By the apocalyptic vision you now cultivate, not very important. You believe the liberal and democratic left intellectuals are politically wrong—very well, that is your right. But you show less and less tolerance for, even less and less concern with

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reporting opinions other than your own in good faith. You dismiss them all in one grand sweep of your undeniably powerful rhetoric. Something of the brutality of the commissars has rubbed off on you, I'm afraid.

It did not seem so in *The First Circle* or *Cancer Ward*. What has happened to you?

In *The Oak and the Calf* you write with anger about the fact that your letters to the Soviet rulers went unanswered. That anger is justified. But let me say to you, with the greatest respect, that not only I, but a good many other Americans, would be interested in seeing your reply to this letter.

Irving Howe

Irving Howe is author, with Kenneth Libo of *How We Lived: A Documentary History of Immigrant Jews in America, 1880-1930* (Richard Marek).

Flirting with the Butcher of Baghdad.

The Courtship of Iraq

by Amos Perlmutter

The drums around Washington have begun to beat out faint but persistent signals heralding what could become the strangest diplomatic seduction scene of this troubled political year. Judging by the drift of pronouncements by knowledgeable commentators and the cautious entreaties of National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Carter administration is adopting a distinctly flirtatious attitude toward Iraqi strongman Saddam ("the engineer of revolution") Hussein. Coming at a time of increased tension between Iraq and Iran on the one hand, and the US and Iran on the other, the US feelers are not likely to be ignored by the pragmatic Hussein, whose strategies for Iraqi hegemony in the Middle East are well known.

Already stories have appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* painting pictures of a moderate and benign Iraq as the logical successor to Iran as the dominant power in the Persian Gulf and a likely candidate for closer ties with the United States. Both Claudia Wright in the *Times* and Rowland Evans and Robert Novak in the *Post* have promoted Iraq for its military strength and potential for providing Arab leadership friendly to the US in the Gulf region.

But this new interest in Iraq has not been limited to the press. Brzezinski has hinted at his increasingly accommodating view of Iraq informally within the foreign policy community; and most recently, on the April 19 "MacNeil/Lehrer Report," he went on the record with a virtual declaration of the administration's intention to court Iraq: "We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq," he said. "We feel that Iraq desires to be independent, that Iraq wishes a secure Persian Gulf, and we do not feel that American-Iraq relations need to be frozen in antagonism. . . . We do not wish to continue the anomalous state of US-Iraq relations, though we recognize that the road towards improvement is a long one."

The Carter administration's rationale for promoting a relationship with Iraq in the Persian Gulf is multifaceted. Looking at the rubble of its Iranian policy and seeing the days of the hostage captivity pile up relentlessly, the Carter administration sees Iraq as a potential check on the Iranian Islamic revolution, and a stabilizing force in the Persian Gulf. To the administration, Iraq and Hussein now loom as the protectors of Saudi Arabia and its oil. Somewhere in the future, also, is the prospect of a de-radicalized Iraq, weaned from the dominant shadow of the Soviet Union to a closer relationship with the United States.

Hussein, sniffing the political winds correctly, has done nothing to discourage US attentions, and in fact has encouraged them. He has increased Iraq's oil exports to the Western nations, has proposed "liberating" South Yemen from its Marxist traces, and has offered himself as the protector and guarantor of Saudi Arabia's stability and as the preeminent bulwark against radical Islamic forces. Lately Hussein has been trying to be the picture of a moderate, calm statesman, even going so far as to conspicuously absent Iraq from the last meeting of the Rejectionist-Steadfastness Front, which Iraq founded.

Hussein's anti-Israeli stance has been stringent, consistent, and open at least since 1978 when, in a Baghdad radio speech, he declared that "the essence of the Iraqi regime's stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict is principled and immovable on a total rejection of any political solution. Settlement lies in an all-out military

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struggle, aimed at uprooting Zionism from the area."

In the same year, Hussein and then-nominal Iraqi ruler Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, along with President Hafez Assad of Syria, created the Charter of National Action, the foundation for the Rejectionist Front. The Front itself was created at a Tripoli meeting in December 1977. Iraq, Syria, Libya, Algeria, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization banded together to form the Rejectionist Front. In the wake of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, the Front called for an economic war against Sadat, Zionism, and American imperialism.

Since that time, the Front, headed by a militarily dominant Iraq, has been a powerful force in keeping moderate states such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan in line. Iraq has served as a sanctuary for the most radical Arab and Palestinian groups, including groups directly connected to Moscow, such as the Abu Nidal (Black June) group operating in South Yemen. Iraq has also supported the Dhofar revolution in Oman.

Iraq's consistently hard-line, anti-Israeli, anti-settlement stance strongly suggests that its absence from the Front's last meeting in Libya was not so much a change of direction as a cosmetic signal to the West. It is the West, after all, that has taken Iraq's absence as a signal. Thus far, no member-state has cried out at Iraqi desertion of the Front.

Nevertheless, Hussein and Iraq have good reason to attempt a relationship with the United States; in the long run, the Iraqis have nothing to lose. The United States seems impotent in its long-running war of nerves with Iran, especially as clamor for the use of force increases in the US. The Soviet Union seems mired in Afghanistan. The Arab world seems to be searching for a leader. A gesture of friendship with the West and the United States seems rife with opportunity for Iraqi action against Iran, action that the US might be forced to sanction.

For Iraq to become a credible US ally, or even a tacit friend, it would have to become de-radicalized, de-Sovietized, and give up its imperial ambitions in the Gulf region. It is a fact that Iraq and the Soviet Union have had a treaty of friendship since 1972, which is still in effect. It is a fact that Iraq depends almost solely on the Soviet Union for its arms. It is equally true that Iraq has not always been in agreement with the Soviet Union, opposing the USSR openly on its invasion of Afghanistan. It does not follow, however, that Iraqi opposition to the Soviet Union on specific issues means a friendlier attitude toward the United States. As Hussein himself has said: "I may be angry at the Soviet Union but I am negative about the United States." All of these facts aside, what is important to remember is that Iraq is a radical, Marxist state and is therefore naturally and politically an ally of the USSR. That is not likely to change, nor are the prospects realistic for Iraq meeting any conditions for closer ties with the US.

In addition, Egypt, the cornerstone of US hopes among Arab moderate states, has become increasingly apprehensive about Iraq and about US courtship of Iraq. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat clearly expressed his apprehensions to President Carter in his recent visit here, according to senior Egyptian diplomatic sources. Sadat, who has embarked on what he calls a "99 percent" pro-American policy, has been deeply angered and traumatized by the failure of US policy in Iran, by the US failure to bring the Saudis and the Jordanians into the peace talks, and now by the possible US promotion of Iraq. The realization of that prospect could completely isolate and alienate Sadat. The policy also illustrates the insensitivities of American policy-makers to history: Iraq is not only an enemy of Egypt now; it has been for centuries.

Iraq is a country where minority Sunni rulers have dominated a majority population of Shiites and Kurds since 1968. Iraq's population is 29 percent Sunni, 46 percent Shiite, and 13 percent Kurdish; by contrast, the Baathist-dominated Iraqi army is 80 percent Sunni, 14 percent Shiite and four percent Kurdish; Iraq's officer corps is 90 percent Sunni. Its recent political history is violent enough to curdle the blood of Macbeth. Iraq today is ruled by Saddam Hussein, president of the Revolutionary Command Council, secretary general of Baath, and referred to by critics as "The Butcher of Baghdad." He is a Baathist officer who came to power in a bloody 1968 *coup d'état* and has maintained power through violence.

From 1963 until 1968, Iraq was ruled by the Aref Brothers, who themselves had come into power in the wake of a violent coup. One of the brothers, Abd al-Salem Aref, who had engineered the 1963 coup, is said to have disappeared mysteriously in a helicopter that was lost in a desert sandstorm in 1967. The other Aref, Abd al-Rahman Aref, the de facto ruler, was killed in the coup engineered by Hussein and Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, both from the village of Takrit, and both Baathist officers. (Iraq, in fact, could be said to be under Takriti rule. Takrit, a Sunni village in Northern Iraq, is the birthplace of many prominent Baathist and army figures as well as that of Hussein and Al-Bakr, who are, incidentally, related.) Al-Bakr became the nominal ruler but it was Hussein who wielded the real power as head of the security forces and director of intelligence.

With an eye on the history of past successful dictatorships and tyrannies, Hussein's first move was to purge the army and to execute or exile a number of opposition Baathist, Shiite, and Kurdish officers. He also created an elite party militia, or "Regular Army," its members recruited from loyal party militants.

In 1978, the Iraq regime grew even more violent and nepotistic. Hussein found the perfect instrument of terror in Khairallah Hussein, his son-in-law and Bakr's first cousin. Khairallah, Iraq's minister of defense since 1977 as well as the governor of Baghdad, organized a group of his own personal assassins and began a series of murders, including the 1978 shooting of former Iraqi prime minister Al-Naif in front of the Hilton Hotel in

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London. In 1979, Al-Bakr, aging and perhaps not a little nervous, relinquished power to Hussein, who assumed the presidency of the revolutionary council. Once again, Hussein, ever careful to protect his flanks, unleashed Khairallah on about a dozen opposition Shiite officers, all of whom were rounded up, tortured, and killed in a brutal day-long operation reminiscent of Hitler's Night of the Long Knives.

Hussein's involvement in the brutalities and violence of recent Iraqi political history is first-hand and continuous. Nineteen years ago, he failed in an attempt to assassinate Abdelkarim Qassem, then Iraq's leader. For his efforts, Hussein ended up with a bullet in his thigh which he personally cut out with his pocket knife. In 1979 Hussein himself, along with his body guard, oversaw the ruthless slayings of the opposition Shiite officers.

There is no doubt that Iraq is a country with enormous military potential and capacity. It has 13 million people, a gross national product of $18 billion, and a defense budget of $3.5 billion yearly. Its military consists of 190,000 men in its army, organized into 12 divisions, of which four are armored and two mechanized. In its arsenal are 2200 tanks, of which 1000 are high-level, Russian-manufactured T-62s; 1700 pieces of artillery, and assorted missiles. It also has an air force of 30,000 men using such equipment as 450 attack aircraft (more than, for instance, Great Britain's total fighter aircraft), of which 140 are high-quality MIG 23-Bs, Sukhois (7B, 20), and Ilyushin 28s. It has 4000 sailors in its navy, which includes 12 torpedo boats, 14 anti-missile boats, and 19 others. Since 1973, Iraq's army has grown from six or seven divisions to the current 12, plus three airborne brigades. In this period, its tank force has doubled and its total of combat airplanes went from 250 to 450, while the number of helicopters jumped from 80 to 225. Iraq also has acquired a fleet of tank carriers that potentially could be used against Israel.

Last and most ominously, Iraq is the only Arab country attempting to develop a nuclear capacity—with the active help of Italy and France. Rome is reportedly supplying Iraq with fissionable material as well as a "hot cell" laboratory; France has sold Iraq a nuclear research reactor and already may be shipping the highly enriched uranium fuel needed to power it. It is an arsenal Iraq can use on many fronts, but it is most likely to be used against the oil-rich states of Kuwait and Iran, should the opportunity present itself. Since 1978, the Iraqi Takrit regime, after achieving internal stability, has periodically and often violently tried to renew its technical claims on Iran and Kuwait. Dormant recently, these claims are now alive again as Iran stumbles toward possible political disintegration under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Hussein and Iraq have two ambitions in the Gulf, one of a general and long-ranging nature, the other immediate and territorial. Iraq wants nothing less than to be the dominant Arab power in the Persian Gulf, replacing a slowly disintegrating Iran, which is now almost solely focused on its own internal politics and its long-running hostage showdown with the United States.

According to the Iraqi press, Hussein seeks to gain control over Iranian Khuzistan (or Arabistan, as termed by Iraq), and Iranian Baluchistan, and Kuwait, all of which, not coincidentally, are oil-rich. Iran and Iraq, in fact, fought a number of small wars between 1973 and 1975 over the areas on either side of Shatt al-Arab, the river border areas that separate Khuzistan from Iraq. The 1975 Algiers-Tehran agreement between the shah and Hussein (in which Iran promised to stay out of Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraq promised to cease hostilities in Iranian Khuzistan) is no longer valid today. In April, the old war flared up again at precisely the moment that a beleagured and divided Iran faced US sanctions and the breakoff of formal diplomatic relations.

Brzezinski's motivation in championing Iraq at first would appear to be puzzling since hegemony over the Persian Gulf by a Soviet military client would hardly appear to help US interests. Brzezinski's stance, however, could have as much to do with professional jealousy as it would with the formulation of policy. It was Brzezinski's predecessor, Henry Kissinger, after all, who helped turn Egypt from a Soviet client state into at least a nominal American ally. It would appear that Iraq is designated to be Brzezinski's Egypt and his page in the history books. If Iraq is to be courted, it is with the intention of weaning it away from the Soviet Union. The major problem with this kind of wishful thinking is that Iraq is not Egypt; Egypt after 1973 was no longer expansionist. Iraq is just beginning its expansionist career. Iraq needs Soviet weapons and military power if it is to have the potential to dominate Iran and pro-Western Kuwait as well as maintain and sustain its Rejectionist Front; Egypt needed Russia only as long as it fought against Israel. The real turning point in US-Egyptian relations came with the delivery of two billion dollars in American military aid after the Camp David agreements in 1978.

The fall of the shah created a military and political vacuum in the Persian Gulf, a vacuum that Iraq intends to fill. The shah, whatever his humanitarian failings, was a strong buffer against Takriti Iraq. The Iran of the ayatollah has succeeded in putting gigantic holes in that buffer and disrupting the balance of power in the Gulf, creating numerous opportunities for the Iraqis. It is foolish to think that a pro-Marxist, pro-Soviet Baathist regime, the leader of Arab radicalism and rejectionism, is about to become an American ally or even a tacit partner without exacting an enormous price. For the US, that price may involve looking the other way while Iraq invades the Iranian oilfields. There are other dangers in encouraging Iraq in its imperial ambitions. An Iraqi move against Yemen would be made on purely

(continued on page 24)

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MORTGAGE MONEY: WHO NEEDS IT? WHERE WILL IT COME FROM?

You can't always choose the best time to buy a new house. The new job won't move closer. The children won't stop growing. So you may find yourself looking for mortgage money in times like these, when mortgages are hard to find and even harder to afford.

Mortgage money becomes more scarce and costly for many reasons, but generally it is because savings institutions are not able to attract sufficient deposits and have to pay more for the funds they do attract. That's why fewer loans are being made and the requirements are more stringent. You're ready to move, but you're caught in a credit crunch.

CUSHIONING THE CREDIT CRUNCH

This has happened off and on for the last 15 years. Yet millions of families found their mortgage money. More than a trillion dollars worth of new mortgage loans have been made since 1965. One reason is that there is a huge secondary market for mortgages, a complex system of private businesses and government agencies which buys mortgages from the original lenders, thereby replenishing their supply of money. One part of that market is the Federal National Mortgage Association, or Fannie Mae, a shareholder-owned corporation working in the private sector.

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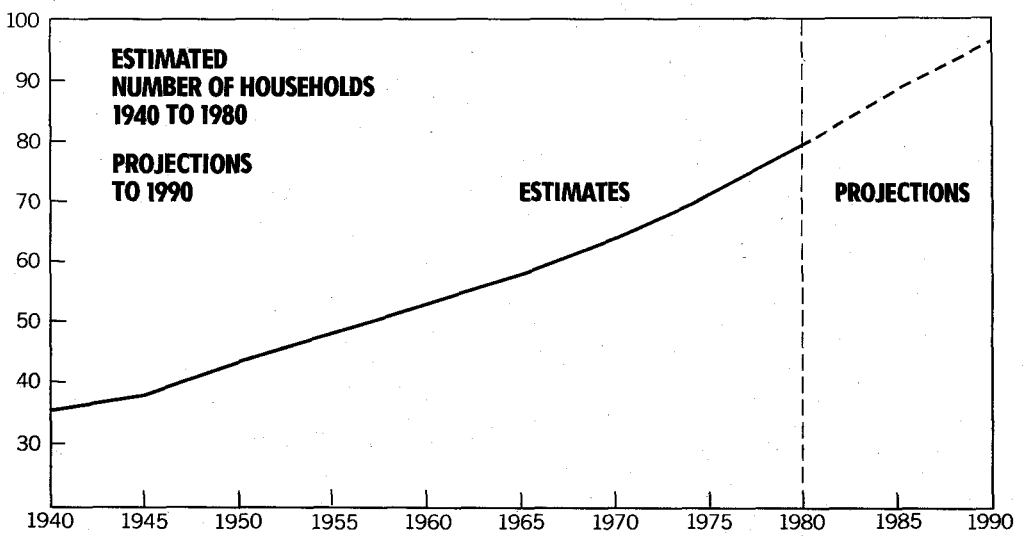
THE WINDOW THAT NEVER CLOSES

When funds from other sources dry up or are limited, Fannie Mae is still buying. Unlike banks and savings and loans, which usually must depend on funds from local depositors, Fannie Mae can tap capital markets worldwide. The money we borrow is then "recycled," used to purchase mortgages, replenishing the supply available for new loans.

Since becoming a private corporation in 1968, Fannie Mae has purchased mortgages worth $65 billion representing financing for close to 3 million housing units for moderate- and middle-income families. That makes us the largest single supplier of funds for home mortgages.

Knowing that Fannie Mae is always there has created a foundation of confidence for the housing industry, providing needed stability in what had been a boom-or-bust business. During 1979, for example, Fannie Mae purchased $10.8 billion worth of mortgages, providing financing for more than 230,000 homes.



THE BABY BOOM IS HOUSEHUNTING

Regardless of whether money is tight or easy, interest rates high or low, the demand for home financing will be increasing. The babies born during the post-war boom are ready for places of their own. Nearly 32 million Americans reached 30 years of age during the '70s. During the '80s, 42 million will reach this prime home-buying age.

Additional demands for mortgage funds will come from some new buyers in the housing market. Women who head households, the elderly and single people, for example. Minorities who had found opportunities scarce or non-existent now have the protection of the law to help them enjoy homeownership.

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practical and territorial grounds and, if successful, could create the potential for a North-South pincer movement against Saudi Arabia, a crucial ally of the United States.

Any major successes by Iraq, either against Iran or Saudi Arabia, is bound to be a long-range threat to Egypt, America's staunchest and major Arab ally in the Middle East. Making common cause with the leader of the Rejectionist Front on its own terms can only be seen as undercutting Egypt. The US would seem to be taking the wrong side in an ancient rivalry.

Instead of seeking rapprochement with Iraq, the US should continue to back the moderate Arab states, under the leadership of Egypt, as a strong counterforce against Iraq. Our policymakers, particularly Brzezinski, should take off their blindfolds and look at Iraq for what it really is: a state inimically hostile to US interests, under a regime steeped in bloodshed and violence.

US savings bonds are a rip-off.

Treasury's Little Charade

by Stan Luxenberg

Those people who believe the government does not know how to handle money should be reassured. There is at least one program in Washington that should be the envy of the shrewdest Wall Street financier. Under this ingenious scheme, millions of people voluntarily contribute to the Treasury and are grateful for the opportunity; US Savings Bonds have been responsible for filling government coffers with billions—mainly at the expense of moderate-income people.

At a time when many people are receiving double-digit interest on savings accounts, savings bonds offer only slim returns. By shortchanging small savers, the government is able to avoid borrowing money at market rates. With the new Series EE program, for example, individuals can buy a bond for $25. After 11 years the bond will mature and the saver can cash it, receiving $50—an interest rate of seven percent. Thanks to the current inflation the real value of a bond, of course, quickly declines. However, if the saver decides to cut his losses and cash in the bond before maturity, he will suffer interest penalties. At the end of six months the saver who laid out $25 would receive back $25.50 for an interest rate of four percent. After one year the rate is 4.51 percent. At five years the rate climbs to 5.8 percent. In the past, 67 percent of bonds have been redeemed during the first five years. Buyers with the lowest incomes tend to cash in bonds earliest and receive the lowest rates.

Most bond buyers do not realize they are being had. According to a survey taken in 1976 for the Treasury by University of Michigan researchers, only 25 percent of bond buyers knew what interest rates were paid. And apparently savers saw little reason to inquire. Savings Bonds are a part of the cultural woodwork, an investment the government promises will pay safe, healthy dividends. About 25 million households own the $79.8 billion worth of bonds currently outstanding. This covers about one-tenth of the public debt.

Beginning in 1941 the Treasury offered war bonds paying interest of 2.9 percent by selling citizens on the idea that they could help fight the enemy by loaning the government money. In peacetime the patriotic appeal continued, as children learned about bonds in school and advertising encouraged citizens to assist their country. Last year the bond program ran public service advertising that would be worth $70 million. "U.S. Savings Bonds are one sure way to make your dreams come true," one ad says.

A full-page advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal* recently advised readers to "Follow the Leaders." The ad featured heads of prominent corporations who endorse purchasing bonds. "One of the reasons these 54 American business leaders got where they are today is they know how to handle money and generate ideas," the copy claims. The leaders include William Batten, chairman of the New York Stock Exchange; Walter Wriston, chairman of Citicorp; and David Roderick, chairman of US Steel. Corporate executives have been tapped regularly by the Treasury to serve on committees promoting bond sales. Consumer groups have demanded to know if such wealthy businessmen buy bonds. But the Treasury has refused to cooperate, and the executives themselves have refused to comment.

The Treasury Department's latest sales ploy has been to dub the bonds US Energy Bonds. The idea originated with President Carter's energy speech last July when the president pronounced that small savers should have the opportunity to assist the country in developing energy sources. Thus stimulated, the Treasury Department decided to rename its bonds,

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hoping to encourage patriotic sales. The program changed very little. The money from bonds still goes to the general fund. Treasury sent leaflets to its regional bond sales offices publicizing the new energy bonds and saying that savers could help fight the energy problem by purchasing the new bonds. Consumer groups protested that such advertising was misleading and the energy promotional materials were withdrawn, though the name has been retained. Several groups including the Gray Panthers and the Mexican-American National Organization also filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, charging the secretary of the Treasury with fraudulently promoting bonds. Bond salespeople have been instructed not to promote their product as a solution to the energy crisis.

The biggest boon to bond sales over the years has been the payroll savings plans offered by 46,000 businesses and government agencies. About 58 percent of the 16 million people who bought bonds last year purchased them through payroll savings. Under these plans, employees can request to have a certain amount automatically deducted from their paychecks in order to buy bonds. Participating companies typically appoint canvassers who pass out bond order cards to fellow employees. The percentage of employees participating runs from near zero in some textile companies where canvassing is not permitted for fear of covert union organizing to well over 80 percent in some companies where purchases are encouraged by management.

At Chemical Bank in New York, 51 percent of the 15,000 employees are enrolled in the savings plan. Robert A. Geib, assistant to the chairman, says he and other top executives buy bonds to give as gifts and for children, but that the payroll savings plan is aimed mainly at lower-level employees. It is a convenient device so that people lacking willpower can save. "The biggest appeal is to lower-salary people," Geib says. "You're appealing to a group of people who really wouldn't save otherwise or they're young people who are starting on the job. They're just starting to make money and they're not used to saving."

Low-salaried people typically request that as little as 50 cents or two dollars be deducted from their pay every week. This money is held by the payroll savings plan until the person has accumulated enough money to purchase the bond. The plan makes the purchase and mails the bond to the saver. Payroll savings plans reduce the already low interest rates earned by savers because the money sits idle earning no interest until enough is deducted to pay for the bond. Someone deducting 25 cents a week would wait almost two years before earning any interest.

Because of this waiting period and the interest penalties involved with early redemption, many bond buyers would be better off putting their money in a passbook savings account that earns 5½ percent. With bank savings accounts, at least money immediately begins earning interest and can be withdrawn without penalty. For those with some cash there are much better interest rates available than those offered by bonds. Many banks offer six percent interest on $500 that must be deposited for 90 days. If kept in the bank for two and one-half years the $500 can earn 12½ percent. Savings banks recently were paying over 14.7 percent on six-month certificates of deposit of $10,000. US treasury bills of $10,000 held for three months pay 15.17 percent. A $1000 Treasury note can earn 12 percent over seven and one-quarter years. Many credit unions are now offering one-year certificates that sell for $100 and pay 10 percent interest. Money market funds are now paying over 13 percent on a minimum of $1000.

These high rates of return partly explain why bond sales dropped last year. In 1979, sales of bonds totaled $6.9 billion, down 12 percent from 1978. Redemptions reached nine billion dollars, up 43 percent. Not surprisingly, the sharpest declines came in sales of larger bonds and those sold through banks. Sales of smaller denominations and those sold through payroll savings remained steady.

The Treasury Department apparently has recognized the unfairness of its program, and is concerned about the erosion in sales; it has asked Congress to raise the rates on bonds. Though a House-Senate conference committee voted to allow interest in savings accounts to rise gradually, there is no indication that bond rates will be raised. In March Assistant Treasury Secretary Roger C. Altman said that the delays by Congress in raising rates could unfairly hurt "savings bonds purchasers and holders as interest rates rise on competing forms of savings."

Though Treasury has sought to raise rates, it also has developed elaborate justifications for the low-yielding bonds. If the bond rate were raised, Secretary of the Treasury Miller said recently, savers would pull money out of the already low deposits of banks that are needed to finance housing. (Clearly the solution is to increase both bond *and* bank rates.) Bonds also provide tax advantages since the interest is free of state and local taxes, Treasury points out. However, this is only a benefit for those making enough to worry about their tax brackets. For the small savers, the primary buyers, tax shelters serve little purpose. Treasury also says that bonds are a good way to save for retirement since income taxes can be deferred until retirement when the saver will be in a lower tax bracket. But for most people, there are better ways to earn retirement income—such as individual retirement accounts that can bring in eight percent or more.

The Treasury's best argument is that the bonds offer convenience. People can save without making any effort, and not surprisingly, this is a major reason people do buy bonds, according to the University of Michigan survey. But the real question is whether the government should be involved in this charade of providing a savings service at all.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

From Dark to Light

This is the spring of the historical documentary—here is another. *On Company Business* is a three-hour job on the CIA made by Allan Francovich and Howard Drach which, after playing at Filmex in Los Angeles, had its New York premier in the valuable film series at the Public Theater. Composed in the now-standard form of interwoven newsreels and new interviews, but well composed, the three hours trace the formation of the CIA after World War II and its operations in a number of countries since then, with heavy emphasis on the agency's intent to influence politics in those countries rather than to gather intelligence. As with *The Trials of Alger Hiss*, the film's ostensible tone is objectivity and there certainly are spokesmen for the CIA's point of view, like David Atlee Phillips who is candid but firmly loyal; but—again as with *Hiss*—the very choice of subject, indeed the very carefulness of the balance, ironically leaves little doubt about the filmmakers' sympathies.

Among the ex-members of the CIA who criticize it are Philip Agee, Victor Marchetti, and John Stockwell, who give their versions of grim activities in several of the countries. A. J. Langguth, former Latin-American correspondent of the *New York Times*, makes particularly pungent comments about Dan Mitrione, who was murdered in Uruguay by terrorists. (Costa-Gavras treated the subject in *State of Siege*, but the actual recording of Mitrione conversing with one of his kidnappers outdoes the film.) Edward Korry, US ambassador to Chile during the Allende regime, is still bemused by Nixon's venom on the subject of Allende. Laura Allende, the sister of the president, speaks of her dead brother with touching dignity. (A pithy supplement to *Power of the People*, reviewed last week.)

Not a great deal in *On Company Business* will be startling to those who read newspapers and magazines and who have done a little reading between lines. For example, Marchetti says here that, after Richard Helms, the former CIA director, was convicted of perjury, Helms said that if he hanged, a lot of others would hang with him, including Nixon and Ford. Helms was let off with a $2000 fine and a suspended sentence. The implication was plain at the time; Marchetti brings it forward.

Still, the film reminds and strengthens. Two matters—again not news—stood out for me: the connections between the AFL-CIO and the CIA, though stoutly denied by George Meany and others in interspliced newsreel clips; and the statements that decisions on major CIA moves—from political pressure to engagement of the Mafia for assassination attempts—are made by the president of the US. Over and over again we are told that this or that action goes back to the Oval Office, whoever the tenant.

A sum of 15 or 20 minutes could have been snipped out of this film to its advantage. As with *Hiss*, Francovich and Drach accumulated so much material which interested them that they dimmed a bit on the balance between that material and the endurance of an audience. After a while, the impact weakens simply by repetition.

But the film's final effect is terribly disquieting. Like every reasonably alert person, I've known something about the shocking actions of the CIA—sometimes shocking in their ineptness—and I've shared the widespread reaction of outrage, not least that an espionage system should be used as a terrorist-political instrument. It's not hard to understand Iran's present feelings toward the US after seeing the torture rooms of the shah's secret police and after hearing an ex-official of the CIA, who dealt principally with Iran, state that the shah was pretty much a mouthpiece for US decisions. But isn't my outrage pharisaical? Isn't it a global amplification of New York City's feelings about the Woman's House of Detention that used to be in Greenwich Village? That women's prison was torn down because it was in the middle of town and we all had to look at it. Whatever went on there still goes on elsewhere, some place where we don't have to look at the building every day and be reminded of it. Isn't what we want a less visible, smarter, cleaner CIA that does what it has to do—in favor of progressive foreign governments rather than reactionary ones? Are we objecting to the CIA or its inefficiencies and choices of support?

It's childish in one's own life to justify actions by what others do, but is this true in international politics? What would an equivalent film about the KGB reveal? And isn't the fact that there could not conceivably be an equivalent film, publicly shown, at least a dram of an argument for the CIA? Anyone who isn't sickened by much of *On Company*

Films Worth Seeing

Best Boy. Don't be put off by this documentary's subject—a middle-aged man mentally retarded since birth. Ira Wohl has made this picture about his cousin—and his wonderful aunt—with reticence and love.

Coal Miner's Daughter. Sissy Spacek agreeably homespun as Loretta Lynn—and Spacek sings the songs herself, pleasantly. The first half is a graphic drama of family life in Appalachian poverty; the second half is trite martyrdom by success.

The Left-Handed Woman. Peter Handke joins the select company of fine writers who are fine directors. He wrote the screenplay before he wrote the novel, and with the ideal casting of Edith Clever in the title role, he has made it into a "moment" of exquisite, charged silence.

Soupçon. Fun through pleasant fibbing, from the man who made *Cousin, Cousine* and is getting better at the job.

SK

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Business can't be much concerned with the moral quality of this country, but isn't that sickness a variety of privilege, earned for us by others' dirty work? Isn't our feeling about the CIA an extension of our feeling about our local police? Many of us have an instinctive dislike of them; we know that at least some men—and women—become policemen because the uniform licenses certain kinds of egos and violence and corruption. But which of us wants to do without police? Probably our ambivalence on the subject keeps us from being either smug or barbarous.

I hope that the white space between that review and this one helps you to shift mood completely. We move now to froth.

Our times, perhaps because we're all so well aware of matters like the above, frown on high spirits, genuine high spirits. There is hardly such a thing any more in film: most comedy, even the wackiest, is touched with satire. Occasionally there's a farce, but farce is different: farce is, or can be, just for laughs—it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with sheer high spirits, which have nothing to do with jokes.

Here, persistently out of tune with the times, is the French director Philippe de Broca. Like the hero of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, he really claims only one gift: lightness of heart. And how difficult this makes his career. No matter how well he does his light-hearted films—which admittedly fluctuate in quality—they tend to be underrated because what they are basically about is feeling good.

Incorrigible, de Broca's latest, is one of his better recent efforts, a bubbly diversion, and I hope it's not going to be overlooked because of that. The script is by Michel Audiard, a screenwriter (and director) chiefly associated with high comedy; the star is Jean-Paul Belmondo, chiefly associated with everything, but a frequent collaborator of de Broca's. When you consider that Audiard was born in 1920, that de Broca and Belmondo were both born in 1933, the sheer unforced brio of the film is all the more enjoyable.

The story is about a charming con man (yet again!) just out of jail, his schemes, his friends, his amours, and his happy come-uppance at the hands—well, not exactly the *hands*—of the young woman whom the government assigns to him as his post-penal social counselor. But the plot isn't of much consequence. What the picture is about is feeling good. As often before, de Broca stakes everything on effervescence, and this time the film flies.

Largely this is Belmondo's doing, and he really does his doing. This 47-year-old plays like a 27-year-old. (His body, seen in a bathtub shot, is younger than that.) The essence of the film's style is a combination of Belmondo's energy and de Broca's camera, which frequently travels right along with him like a chum. Between the two of them, actor and director, *Incorrigible* is implicitly a dance film.

De Broca is good with his other actors, too. Geneviève Bujold, superbly photographed by Jean Bernard Penzer, is pert and firm and winning as the counselor, more delightful than ever. Julien Guiomar, a Buñuel veteran, is wonderfully wheezy as an older swindler, and Andrea Ferreol, of *La Grande Bouffe*, is funny as a *lieder* singer very refayned on stage but growlingly lubricious in the wings.

If you know de Broca's films, you'll recognize touches: the crinkum-crankum home as in *The Joker*, the taking-over of a restaurant by a happy pair as in *The Five-Day Lover*, the coolly unexplained continuous run from one *continent* to another as in *That Man from Rio*. (And a touch of René Clair in the singer sequence.) But de Broca can juggle. It's something of an achievement, I'd say, to do it so adroitly in a shaky world.

Robert Brustein on theater

Advice for Broadway

I've been trying for hours to write about another defunct Broadway play—*Clothes for a Summer Hotel* by Tennessee Williams—but the exercise is just too futile. You couldn't possibly be interested in my opinions of a work you'll never get a chance to see; and I suspect the playwright would just as soon let the moment pass in silence while he licks his wounds and ponders his next move (perhaps a flight to Three Mile Island on a one-way ticket). In the past, one would review a failed play by a major playwright for the sake of the record; but I suspect that *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* will disappear without trace, without publication, without further notice except by assiduous graduate students doing studies from abandoned production books. And Williams is not the only distinguished casualty of the season. Broadway this year has watched the best minds of its generation destroyed—not by madness but by critical revulsion and audience disgust. Something in the system is obviously going haywire. The sky is falling, and perhaps we'd better start examining the pieces before the playwrights turn to writing memoirs, the actors decamp for Hollywood, the producers start investing in cotton futures, and the folks out front settle in for cable TV.

Broadway has always been a wasteful system—wasteful of talent, wasteful of time, wasteful of money. But previously, over every backer's audition has hovered the spirit of Las Vegas, with its promise of lifetime annuities for successful investors. Today, however, the odds being posted on a Broadway success are so rotten that, by comparison, even silver seems a more dependable commodity. This creates the distinct impression that some day, soon, the money may decide to stop. Until very recently, producers like David Merrick, Robert Whitehead, and Alexander Cohen were usually responsible for three or four productions a season; now it's rare if they offer even one. (I notice, by the way, that theater ads no longer mention the names of the people responsible for the show in the first place. Are Broadway producers trying to keep a low profile in order to duck potential creditors?) Investors are becoming wary of everybody; no one can guarantee a hit. Our leading writers—Miller, Albee, Williams—are all poison at the box office, and even Neil Simon is growing undependable.

Well, you'll say, there's still the Broadway musical if you're looking for a commodity guaranteed to attract an audience. I count 14 of these in the current Theater Directory, as opposed to 13 comedies, dramas, and variety shows. Of the 14, seven are holdovers from past seasons, three are revivals from the "golden age" of musicals, two will close before you read this. The two remaining—*Evita* and *Sugar Babies*—are the season's only contributions to successful investment, and only one is native-born. Two musical hits, eight

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months into the year. An amputated handful of surviving attractions to justify New York's claim to be the cultural capital of the world.

In my own home city of Boston, I have watched a succession of Broadway-bound projects being felled by local apathy; I suspect the same thing is happening in other tryout cities like Washington and Philadelphia. Where playwrights used to stay up all night at the Ritz revising their plays to conform with out-of-town reactions, now they are just as likely to chuck the whole thing into the hotel wastebasket at the earliest sign of sour criticism. This, in turn, is affecting the commercial playhouses, which are gradually being razed to make way for parking lots and luxury hotels. And it is also affecting the out-of-town theatergoer, who is displaying more and more reluctance to shell out so much money for dubious and transient pleasures that don't even offer the advantage of conversational one-upmanship. The situation is causing desperation in New York, one sign of which, paradoxically, is the standing ovation. If the show manages to find its way to Broadway after its tribulations out of town, you will invariably find a portion of the diminished audience rising to its feet and cheering the dejected actors during their final bows—a gesture motivated by the same impulses, and carrying as much conviction, as the "I Love New York" commercials.

How is it possible to make Broadway production less random, more certain? Many methods have been tried, none with much success. Most recently, the commercial theater made an effort to create an alliance with the resident theater in the hope of developing a successful new form of pre-New York tryout. Producers would monitor, perhaps even subsidize, projects at resident theaters and share the profits if they moved to Broadway. Apart from the dubious moral impact on the non-profit theaters, about which I've had my say, the practical effect of these transfers has proved very uneven. The Long Wharf's production of Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine* faded very quickly early in the season, and the usually enterprising Mark Taper Theater, after enduring criticism from some Los Angeles critics for producing such puff pastry as Neil Simon's *I Ought To Be In Pictures*, suffered the added embarrassment of seeing its sure-fire hit get burned to a crisp in New York (though another Taper transfer, *Children of a Lesser God*, has recently fared considerably better with the Broadway critics). Plays continue to transfer uptown from off-Broadway, including some of Broadway's longest-running hits (*Gemini, The Elephant Man, Grease, A Chorus Line*), but this has been going on for over 20 years, merely reinforcing the sense that this formerly experimental area has been expropriating many of the projects normally produced by the commercial theater.

The crisis on Broadway, in other words, is threatening all the other structures with the loss of their original purpose and definition. Instead of debauching the alternative theater, and making it over in its image, Broadway perhaps ought to consider changing its own image along the lines of the subsidized theaters, as a practical way to help its survival. I am perfectly aware that one of the charms of being a Broadway buccaneer is to gamble everything on a single throw of the dice; this kind of rampant entrepreneurialism is built into the very scaffolding of the society. But wouldn't it be possible to channel this gambling instinct into a more sensible method of procedure? What I would suggest is the establishment of a producing consortium, consisting of the most canny producers on Broadway, who might pool their knowledge and resources for a collective purpose. Writers once did this, in a unit called The Playwrights Company which mounted productions of their plays on the commercial stage. A Producers

FOR MARY ANN YOUNGREN

1932-1980

Mary Ann, as they handed you the cup
near the black waters of Lethe,

(the cup of *Forgetfulness,*
the waters of *Obliteration,*)

did you reach for it greedily—

just as, alive, you abruptly needed

not to answer the phone for days: ballet tickets
unused: awake all night: pacing

the apartment: untouchable: chain-smoking?

Dip a finger into the River of Time,—
it comes back
STAINED.

*

No, that's *not* enough,—
not true, wrong—

dying of cancer, eager to have the whole thing
over, you nonetheless waited

for your sister to arrive from California
before you died,—

you needed to bring up your cruelest, worst
adolescent brutality, asking:

DO YOU FORGIVE ME?

Then: WILL YOU MISS ME?

At the Resurrection of the Dead,
the world will hear us say

The phone is plugged in, please call,
I will answer it.

Frank Bidart

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Company could provide much the same kind of cooperative reinforcement.

What this would mean, procedurally, is the sharing—among a select group of producers and investors—of a certain percentage of the profit and loss of Broadway production, much as a popular play in the season of a repertory theater helps to support the more experimental work. If one producer had the good luck to come up with a hit musical, then a portion of his profits could help underwrite another producer's dramatic flop. Just as *A Chorus Line* has managed to float the New York Public Theater for a number of years, so *Sugar Babies* or *Annie* could make it possible for plays of a more ambitious kind to be staged again on Broadway. Obviously, this reduces the incentive for certain people; backers do not support Broadway for altruistic motives. But if some of the greedier investors might balk at contributing a portion of their potential income to other productions, there are those who might be attracted to a system that reduces the element of financial risk. It is probable, even in the current circumstances, that there is enough profit generated by one or two long-running shows to support all the less popular productions; it is even possible that some of these might be subsidized long enough to attract a significant audience. Can Broadway be induced to give up its love of the Big Bonanza? I don't think it has much choice, if it wants to survive as more than a locus of head shops, porn shops, and shooting galleries.

For those who are still interested in my impressions of Tennessee Williams's recent misfortune, I can say, briefly, that *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* is another version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, with mad Zelda Fitzgerald substituting for neurotic Blanche Dubois, and the tolling of an ominous bell (presaging Zelda's death by fire) replacing the playing of the Varsouviana (recalling the suicide of Blanche's fiancé). Amidst thunderous literary name-dropping ("My God, Gilbert Seldes just called out to me that Joseph Conrad just died"), Williams sets out to prove that the real artist of the two was not Scott but Zelda Fitzgerald, who would have realized her stardom and her sanity if only her husband hadn't been such a male chauvinist pig. Williams, furthermore, suggests that the pig may actually have been a sow. In an exchange as meanspirited as that passage in *A Moveable Feast* where Hemingway casts doubt on Fitzgerald's potency, Williams implies that lurking behind the masculine pride of both these macho writers was a streak of unacknowledged homoeroticism. As for the production, it also deserves to be unacknowledged. Geraldine Page's face has aged while her voice has regressed—it is now at a pitch that even dogs would have difficulty hearing—and Kenneth Haigh, miscast as Fitzgerald, tries to disguise his embarrassment at being on the stage at all through an offhand absentee performance, which could just as well have been mailed in. The action is set in the 1940s; the design comes out of the 1950s; the ideology belongs to the 1960s. Leaving the theater, I felt in my 80s.

From 'Axel's Castle' to 'To the Finland Station.'

Edmund Wilson in the 1930s

by Leon Edel

How is one to speak of the plunge from the 1920s into the 1930s—the toboggan slide, as it seemed, from affluence to penury? The word used in common talk are "crash" and "slump" or "boom" and "bust" or simply "crisis" and "depression." How can such words begin to suggest shabby gentlemen and women selling apples on the streets? or the shantytown that sprang up below Riverside Drive? or the millions of idle across a continent? New generations cannot begin to feel the strange nightmare moments as we turned into the 1930 decade, 50 years ago. A thick curtain seemed to fall between the moment of the Wall Street panic in 1929 and the beginning of World War II in 1939. Looking backward, Edmund Wilson wrote that it was difficult for those born late "to believe that it really occurred, that between 1929 and 1933 the whole structure of American society seemed to be going to pieces." Seeking for a word in 1932, he spoke of "the American jitters" and published a collection with that title. There was indeed a state of the jitters. But later the word seemed a euphemism for disaster, and in the full light of history Edmund renamed his book, when it was revised and reprinted, *The American Earthquake*.

Now assembled for the first time, the 1930 journals of Edmund Wilson (to be published this summer by Farrar, Straus & Giroux) offer a vivid episodic picture; yet the totality of his kaleidoscopic reporting is highly documentary. A national mosaic takes shape: the desolation of factory shutdowns; the sharecroppers in the South; the insurgent movement of labor to the left; the word "solidarity" emerges—and one is conscious of poverty and suffering, threaded with trivial scenes, and popular songs—*no more money in the bank*—the catchy Depression hit keeps running through Edmund's mind. There was no money in the bank: and the banks at a given moment, like the huge industrial plants, closed their doors. And then, in the midst of the quake, personal life also had its endings. He divorced his actress wife; he bade farewell to poetry; his

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"Charming, rueful, extremely well written."

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VIKING

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books did not sell; his play failed. But he was in love with Margaret Canby, a friend of some years. She was a lively, laughing, unliterary, down-to-earth drinking companion, a woman of warmth and dignity. They married. Their domesticity would be erratic, tempestuous, passionate.

I

At the beginning of the decade Wilson completed *Axel's Castle*, his book on the literary moderns, showing how they descended from the French symbolists. He dealt with Yeats, Joyce, Proust, Valéry, Eliot, Gertrude Stein, anticipating the stature these writers now have. The book was praised, but, given the temper of the times, only modestly (it would have a wide success in the later decades). Even as he read the proofs Wilson asked himself whether it wasn't obsolete. The "high aesthetic" in literature was yielding to the leftist insistence that novelists must concern themselves with the proletariat and poetry proclaim the clenched fist. Wilson understood the mood, even if he had other views. To his friends he jauntily remarked how invigorating it was "to find ourselves still carrying on while the bankers are taking a beating." He liked this quip sufficiently to put it into a comedy about the Depression written in the early 1930s which mocked the discomfiture of the "prosperity decade." But it was clear soon enough that the whole nation was "taking a beating" along with the bankers, and this was not a subject for comedy.

Aware of the national urgencies, Wilson issued an appeal to "progressives" in the columns of *The New Republic*. He wrote:

> Moneymaking and the kind of advantages which a moneymaking society provides for money to buy are not enough to satisfy humanity—neither is a system like ours in which everyone is out for himself and the devil take the hindmost, with no common purpose and little common culture to give life stability and sense.

Old conceptions, he wrote, should be "dynamited" and new ones "as shocking as necessary, substituted." If Edmund sounded ready for revolution, he felt also that Americans needed information. And so he traveled to Detroit, Chicago, the South, wherever there were shutdowns and unrest, to describe and explain and interpret. Of his writings at this time, Matthew Josephson, never an admirer of Wilson, asserted after Edmund's death that they were "the most objective description of America in 1932 that we have."

Wilson's assertion that old conceptions should be dynamited was reshaped very early into a manifesto, issued in 1932 by a group of writers that included Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, Dos Passos, and others. Its text, and the circumstances surrounding it, can be read in Elena Wilson's edition of her husband's literary and political letters. It is a quiet, sober, rather dry statement, and in a low key. The writers were determined not to be inflammatory. There wasn't a stick of dynamite in it. To read it after half a century is to be made suddenly aware how little the 1930

Edmund Wilson

intellectuals knew what Hitler intended, and what Mussolini was doing: the nature of paternal, dictatorial, capitalistic fascism, or its proletarian form under Stalin, was still to be revealed. The manifesto seems now utopian and curiously ingenuous. Free enterprise had proved bankrupt. New social forms, a new social order, new human values were needed. A society stripped of the profit motive and of competition would evolve a changed social philosophy. This was not possible so long as there was "the exploitation of the many for the profit of the few." The manifesto's solution: a "temporary dictatorship of the class-conscious workers." Once nationalization was achieved, and the new society established (one presumed), there would be no further need for this dictatorship. And the manifesto called on writers, engineers, intellectuals, teachers to make common cause with the proletariat. Dos Passos promptly pointed out that the white-collar workers were left out and that certain communist formulas had been followed in spite of their efforts to keep clear of them. Dreiser, who declared for communism, issued his own statement.

Revolutions are not often created by manifestos, and the ferment among the intellectuals, their disregard of the "petty bourgeois"—as Dos Passos and Wilson recognized—and their use of a language unfamiliar to rank-and-file America did not carry the writers far: nor could there be real agreement among them. Wilson's work as a reporter brought him much closer to the nation's realities and he described these with his masterly concreteness. Those who remember him from this time recall the changes that came with middle age. He had ceased to be the slender Ivy League young man of his Greenwich Village days. He had become rotund and ruddy-cheeked. He no longer dressed in a collegiate way, as Scott Fitzgerald described him. He wore business suits, gray or dark blue; he sported a variety of hats, from the floppy to the Stetson. In manner he could be brusque and impatient; in speech he was incisive and he could be rude if foolishly pressed; occasionally he reached for words and a sentence would end in a splutter. His volubility masked shyness and withdrawal and depression, which led to hard drinking. But he could be generous and attentive when approached with directness and clarity. His humane sympathies were wide, and no passage in these journals testifies more to this than the record of his trip to the labor "barricades" in the Kentucky coal fields. Here he saw for himself the ruthlessness and cruelty of company officials, businessmen, and professionals, and their hatred of the locked-out and starving miners. This step in the education of his "social consciousness" was completed by his being ridden out of town by a bunch of pistol-swinging deputies.

II

Edmund Wilson's politics during the 1930s have confused many of his readers and critics. The Marxist penitents, remembering his meetings with communist leaders, and the utopian manifesto, have called him a "Red." Others have used the word "leftist." Still others have suggested he was either a dupe or politically naive. The breast-beaters and name-callers, involved in a constant dance of apology and rear-vision, overlook the simple fact that Wilson was an old-fashioned American individualist. He felt he could vote for

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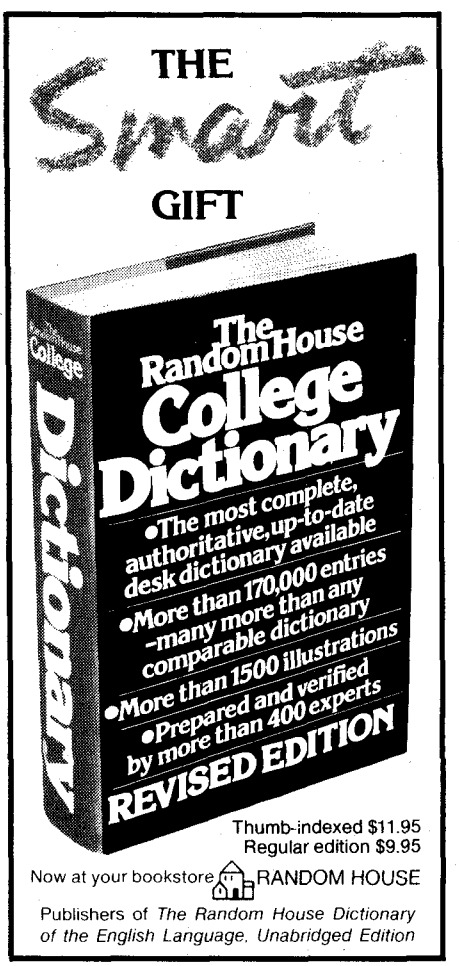
"the party of his choice" in any election without carrying a permanent stigma. A passage in these journals written in Provincetown during the summer of 1932 tells us all we need to know. At the height of the Depression, Wilson felt that the helpless and inert Hoover administration had shown its impotence in calling out the army to drive the bonus marchers from the streets of Washington. Nor was he satisfied with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's platform as the election approached; the time had not yet come for FDR to show his political flexibility and his gift for improvisation. Wilson would always distrust him and accuse him of political duplicities. As for the Norman Thomas socialists, they were like the British Fabians, caught in a dream of some remote welfare state (the term had not yet been invented). Wilson, in later years—or at least up to the time of Adlai Stevenson—voted the Thomas ticket, more in protest than in support. In 1932 he wanted a dynamic platform, "action now," and for one who had seen firsthand the national misery, the Communists offered a program that made sense to him—they would cast out the Washington double-dealers and put the proletariat in the saddle.

Wilson took steps to inform himself. He talked with William Z. Foster, the Communist party leader. He invited him to his home and invited friends to meet him and ask questions. And he decided, as his journal tells us, to vote the communist ticket even though he disliked the rank-and-file party comrades. He followed his social and humane beliefs without making permanent party commitments. He was a freewheeling writer descended from the makers of the American Revolution who was not afraid to be revolutionary. He was never a "joiner," and as he remarks, the Communists would never have considered him for the party even if he had pleaded to join. He had a distinct distaste for stereotyped party utterances; and in Kentucky was critical of their maneuvers. What Wilson came to feel was that the nation and the press tended to second-guess history—a common American failing. Wilson's philosophy of history consisted of study and assessment of the past. He was not concerned with prophecy or the planning of national policy on paranoid assumptions of what other nations might do. He was and remained an independent. He would later denounce the tyranny in Russia as he had denounced the muddle in Washington. And he kept an open mind. He settled now to a close study of Marx—almost as if the Marxian text were written by Joyce or Dante. Later he admitted a bias. He had believed the Soviet Union would "put into practice its Leninist ideals" and "this was implied in my whole attitude toward what was going on at home."

We may wonder why Wilson read so intensively in Marx and Engels, Trotsky and Lenin. More than his usual curiosity was involved. He was aware that Marx was too often invoked without much knowledge of what he had written. The Communist party itself had reduced Marx to a series of slogans and platitudes. Congress was unaware of history—few of its members possessed that kind of literacy. What had Marx really advocated? How were the Russians using him? How did social revolutions begin? Wilson began to see that what was happening in the 20th century needed to be traced back to Vico's ideas in the 17th. But how explain history to a Congress which could only express moral indignation, and a simplifying American press which used only tags and labels? Most persons to whom Wilson talked possessed a derivative Marxism, exception made for philosophers and political scientists. In the fullness of time Wilson himself would sum up his readings. He recognized that Marx clearly understood how workers were exploited and that he had contributed immeasurably to the world's philosophy of labor. But, observed Wilson, "why should we suppose that man's brutal and selfish impulses will all evaporate with a socialist dictatorship?" The welfare state could harbor atrophies and ineptitudes as great as those of free enterprise.

The consequences of Wilson's explorations and self-questionings were far-reaching. He embarked on a book that would parallel *Axel's Castle*. That volume sought the origins of the "modern" movement in literature. Now he would begin to seek out the roots of modernism in politics and revolution. He would show how revolution, rising out of man's misery, gave birth to ideas that flowed and grew within a historic stream, a stream that often became a torrent. He would show how persecutions and massacres and common sufferings, the revolutions in America and France, the years of ferment in Russia, the radicalism in Germany, led up to a singular moment in our time: one might call it the turning point in our century—that moment when Lenin arrived in the city that would bear his name: he came with all this history and theory in his head to take command of the floundering Russian Revolution. The title of Wilson's book suddenly occurred to him as he was walking in the street: *To the Finland Station*. Only later would he realize that he had been influenced by Virginia Woolf's title, *To the Lighthouse*. The Finland Station was the little shabby stucco building, "rubber-gray and tarnished pink" (Wilson would travel to Russia to look at it), in what was then St. Petersburg. Here Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, otherwise Lenin, arrived from his long exile following his wartime journey through Germany in a sealed train. Clutching a bouquet of roses handed him by his admirers, he had delivered one of his portentous slogans: "All power to the Soviets." His book would show, Wilson believed, how history can determine human actions. It would be, as he subtitled it, "a study in the writing and acting of history."

It was a splendid, a poetic conception and he carried out his plan in the hope that it would enlighten American political and social thought. To write this book, Wilson felt he should visit Russia and study the scenes of his drama and thoroughly steep himself in the relevant documents. He knew some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German. He now began the study of Russian. A Guggenheim Fellowship provided him with travel funds. His predecessors in this pilgrimage had been fairly numerous—among them his friend Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Max Eastman, and earlier Lincoln Steffens, who had come back saying the much-quoted words that he had seen the future "and it works." They had gone largely as reporters curious about the new supposed utopia-in-the-making. Wilson went as a historian and with few preconceptions; he had certain unvoiced hopes that Steffens had been right, that some new form of society was emerging. His ostensible goal was the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow. His journals, however, do not tell us of his researches; they testify instead to his many encounters and interrogations. He had done sufficient "homework" by this time to be able to interpret what he heard—and also what could not be heard: the enigmatic reticences, the deep silences. He sought out his fellow historian, Prince D. S. Mirsky, whose work he admired, and we have some notes of their meetings. Mirsky would be one of Stalin's early victims, and Wilson later drew a finely sketched portrait of him, as he amplified his notes. He goes to picnics, night clubs, the Physkultur Parade, museums, monasteries: he is at the ballet, the theater, the opera, and has an easy familiarity from his readings in America with the plays, the players, the directors. His journey up the Volga, in its singular details, is like a Chekhov tale; and to climax his experiences he finds himself a captive student of socialized medicine in the USSR—for he comes down with scarlatina and for some weeks is quarantined in an old, dignified, dirty building in Odessa, a building that went back to the time of Pushkin. There are bedbugs everywhere. The orderlies urinate in the solitary sink near his room. Nurses and patients are cheerful; the patients are mostly children. He has many amusing conversations, is treated with the greatest respect, and at night is permitted to use the operating room as his study. All his bills—including telegrams and cables—are paid by the state. This ends his private adventure in Red Russia. He would continue his Russian studies in all the years to come.

In the year before his death, Wilson took a backward glance at *To the Finland Station*. He was writing a preface for a new edition and he recalled that he had gone to Russia with "a too hopeful bias." "We did not foresee that the new Russia must contain a good deal of the old Russia. . . . I had no premonition that the Soviet Union was to become one of the most hideous tyrannies that the world had ever known, and Stalin the most cruel and unscrupulous of the merciless Russian tsars." However, he believed that his book remained "a basically reliable account of what the revolutionists thought they were doing in the interests of 'a better world.'" He also accepted criticism that he had given too amiable a picture of Lenin. Later documents and much more evidence had convinced him that, behind Lenin's worshipped facade, one could find all the corruptions of power.

III

Edmund Wilson's wife Margaret Canby died two years after their marriage, in an accident while she was in California. She slipped on some steep Spanish-style steps at Santa Barbara and fractured her skull. Wilson boarded a propeller plane for the long trip to the coast; he was overwhelmed and distraught. He nursed anxious thoughts that she might have committed suicide, for he lacked details. His journal record of his stay in California, his visit to the funeral parlor, his talks with relatives are a kind of emptying of his grief, his memories, his guilt. The passage is perhaps the most "felt" and intimate of all his writings about himself. If there had been some strain in the marriage, there had also been the love he now expressed. The monologue provided catharsis, but it did not bring total relief. For years Wilson continued to dream about Margaret: she is alive again, they are coming together, he experiences a kind of sublime joy—and always something happens to keep them apart and he races through rooms and corridors but cannot find her. The dreams suggest profound and unresolved feelings, continuing grief and self-blame; he had a strange sense that in dying she had abandoned him; and then the opposite, he felt guilty, as if he had abandoned her. The monologue reminds one of passages in Proust, or the soliloquy of Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*.

Some readers may be startled by the publication of this intimate record of a marriage. One gains the impression that Wilson wrote the entire passage at a single sitting for himself, without thought of publication. Thirty years later he had it typed up for inclusion in his journals. The candor may seem at times gratuitous; it is a piece of private history, but it is also a search for the truth of personal history. The monologue testifies to Wilson's core difficulty—there were things he could not allow himself to feel. In my introduction to *The Twenties* (Wilson's journal for that decade) I discussed his dissociation of emotion in certain situations. He defended himself against emotional hurt by a kind of curmudgeonly bluntness which sometimes alienated friends. His modes of verbal aggression were in counterpoint with his verbal amiability. One is prompted to say that this problem, which deprived him of certain empathies, made it difficult for him in criticism to deal with writers of our time, like Kafka, who explored man's troubled dream-existence. It ran counter to Wilson's concreteness, derived from his ability to look at reality without having to feel it. In *To the Finland Station* he tells us that Karl Marx's "blinded and paralyzed side" was his "negation of personal relations, of the responsibility of man to man," and there was something of this in Wilson. For he speaks in these journals, in a moment of insight, of "the dead tissue in my soul—it could never grow back." Perhaps he is thinking of the blocked sensibilities of his childhood. There had been, as we know, a deaf mother and a depressed and often apathetic father. The little boy Edmund had considerable difficulty communicating with those closest to him. In the process there was a short-circuiting of the common articulations and joys of childhood. The distancings were carried into adult life. Certain "social reflexes" were thwarted. We are given a glimpse of his insight into himself during a visit to an old friend:

> I was awfully glad to see him, and it was very pleasant at first to talk to him again, with his intellectual range and his cultivation: his history, psychology, literature; but my visit got to be more and more eerie. He wanted to be amiable and hospitable; but he had to make a conscious effort—his solitary and self-centered life had practically deprived him of the social reflexes.

Wilson adds: "I have been that way myself, possibly always to some extent."

There were these sealed corridors in his personal relations, "and it was strange to see it from the outside," Wilson said. He added that it "at once depressed me and made me feel superior." What he could do was to displace emotion from the human scene into his writing. At his desk, the world fell into place. He was free to grasp, explain, sympathize, understand Proust's sensitive childhood, experience Dickens's sufferings and Turgenev's

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struggles with his mother. Wilson's journals reflect a compulsive and meticulous man reaching out with words to himself and his fellow humans, but allowing masses of fact and detail, and intellectual musings, to defend him against full-face encounter. Perhaps in this way we can understand the use of the bold inquiring front, the value language had for him: there was nothing arbitrary about dictionaries, or the past. The past was safe and confrontable.

Why do some authors keep journals? Journals can be a way of shoring up life and siphoning off a surplus of creative energy. They become, on occasion, a device for dealing with parts of experience not readily useful; in effect, they can be a memory bank. We can see how, for André Gide or Thoreau or the copious Anäis Nin—to take three disparate writers—journals became full-length mirrors of the self. In the case of Nin, they seem almost to have become a way of writing her life without having to live it. These are the journals of a profound narcissism. But there are other kinds. Kafka's, as he told us, were a form of prayer. Henry James's were used to solve artistic problems and allay anxiety about his immediate work. Virginia Woolf's enabled her to maintain balance and use her mental irridescence to haul herself up, as it were, from chronic despondency.

Wilson was not creating on the scale of such writers, and his journals, we may judge, served largely the function of memory and self-discipline. They were the notebooks of a chronicler, a way of tidying the mind for his craft of criticism: no meditations, no prayers, no invocation to the muse, no polished mirrors. He tries rather to be a camera, for this is what he finds most comfortable. A camera, however, doesn't think: and Wilson is using his intellectual powers. His sensitivity resides in his visuality. He has an ear for what (and how) people say things. In this way he also tries to be a tape recorder. The journals are his mental account books and a way of handling unachieved relationships. Even his record of his own copulations has this kind of objectivity—as if he were a naturalist at the zoo of himself, writing a chapter of natural history. Thomas Mann, in his highly intellectual way, justified such intimate revelations (when his wife complained) by saying "the most intimate is at the same time the most universal." Erich Heller's response to this seems to me penetrating. Culture is attained, he reminds us, "by a tactful disregard of much that is 'natural.'" When we universalize intimacy, it ceases to be intimate. When we impersonalize the personal, we risk stripping it of its humanity. Wilson also wrote down experience often in order to depersonalize it. Once it was written down, he could detach himself from it. Yet he couldn't part with it. When I said to him one day (we were talking of his journals) that he was after all quite free to revise and change what he had written and even to trim passages, he rebelled. They had acquired total objectivity; they seemed almost not to belong to him. "I don't want to cut any corners," was the way he answered me. "But they're your own corners, Edmund, you can do what you like with them." My rejoinder did not please him. The text had become impersonal. He wasn't going to tamper with it. The text belonged, unchangeably, to literary history.

Thy Neighbor's Wife by Gay Talese

(Doubleday; $14.95)

"The only sin passion can commit is to be joyless." Somebody wonderful said that in a novel; and it is a fitting epigraph for Gay Talese's book—which is about as exciting as Bowling for Dollars, only much much much longer. How can a book about sex be boring? Well you may ask. But unless yawning is your favorite activity, you had far better take my word for it than read this book. Not only is *Thy Neighbor's Wife* boring, it is grim. Poor Gay Talese has managed to produce a book that is as pious and self-righteous as those little religious tracts distributed by sad gray men who invite us to go to hell for thinking nasty thoughts. Actually, those tracts—written, as they are, with a certain verve and a rather charming disregard for syntax—are far more titillating than Talese's pompous tome about (I guess) the sexual revolution. *Thy Neighbor's Wife* is also written without regard to syntax, but it has as little charm as a manual on plumbing, which it in many ways resembles.

Talese, humorlessly militant, is a zealot for a found cause: sexual liberation. It was my impression that sex was doing very well before Gay Talese chose to speak on its behalf; his zeal putteth my brain asleep and doth anesthetize my genitals.

Comparing nuns to "man-hating feminists," Talese presents himself as a product of a Catholic education who was able to throw off the bonds of the Church in order to participate in group sex at a nude spa in Sandstone (California, where else?); to attend classes on female masturbation; to get familiar with the woodwork and "the women and toys" at the Playboy mansion; to find Nirvana in a massage parlor on Lexington Avenue; and to assert his First Amendment right to read *Screw*. It is his novel idea that satisfying sex is a result of having been sexually repressed; since it's his *only* idea, unless you find it entrancing, wait for the movie.

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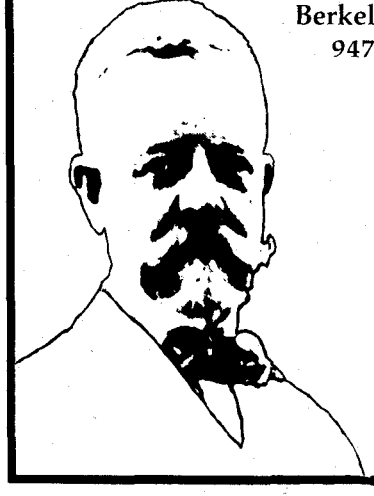

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Talese tells us that sex is good. One already knew that good sex is good. His dogged and desperate pursuit of pleasure, and his clinical litanies, while vastly enriching his coffers, serve only to make one feel that one is in the presence of a fanatic who seems to be shouting in a strangled voice through clenched teeth that *Sex is good, damn it!* Medicinal, not aphrodisiacal.

I don't want to give you the impression that *Thy Neighbor's Wife* is totally without redeeming social value. It's good for a chuckle now and then. As when Talese tells us that in the course of his arduous research—nine years' worth—he spoke to some "admittedly monogamous couples." Now there's a fetching phrase. Gone are the days when monogamy was the love that dared not speak its name; if married couples are now so brave as to "admit" to monogamy, what horrible crimes will be broadcast next? I'm also taken with Talese's notion that masseuses are "the Florence Nightingales of masturbation." He does have a way with words. As when he tells us that a nude model, "aware only of her body as an inspired instrument . . . felt internalized as she danced." The trouble is, I'm not sure what the words mean. Have you felt internalized lately? I also like this one: "*Playboy*'s early success had less to do with the actual magazine than it did with the men who bought it." You tell me what that means.

I am told that the title was the idea of Talese's wife, Nan; and I am also told that it was thought by members of the trade (the book trade, that is) to have been a stroke of genius. (If you read the book, you will hear a lot more about members and strokes; "towering tumescent organs" spring up like dandelions all over the place, usually "glistening," and there's usually a stroking Nightingale ready to receive them, Talese's reach, as a friend of mine says, far exceeding his grasp.) I have a better title: *The Victory of the Bunny Over the Cross.*

Hugh Hefner sits at his desk in Chicago, "the erection center of the ultimate service magazine." Little had Hefner known, when, "at the age of twenty-seven, he had a failing marriage and a 1941 Chevrolet," that "one of Chicago's most magnificent skyscrapers would be his—that a Playboy bunny symbol would be perched atop a thirty-seven story building towering over the golden cross of the nearby Holy Name Cathedral." I can see the titles of the movie flashing across the bunny and the Cross.

Hugh Hefner weaves his way in and out of these pages; Talese uses him to impose a narrative grid on material that simply will not lend itself to narrative. Talese has amassed an enormous number of facts about Hefner; but an accumulation of facts does not add up to a living portrait. We learn, for example, that Hefner wears white socks because he has a foot fungus; we learn that he was a virgin till he was 22; we hear a great deal from and about Hefner's daughter, Christie—and a very little chip off this old block goes a very long way. We learn—no news—of Hefner's "fondness for virgins," and for "wholesome" good looks; we are told that Hefner is "idealistic"—though we are not told what his ideals are. We learn that Hefner, who is incapable of being sexually faithful to a partner for more than a week, was "saddened" by his first wife's infidelity: "she had become tainted by the trend," the "trend" toward promiscuity, which Hefner "intended to take full advantage of," and which he credits himself for helping to create. Well, so what? One is hardly astonished to learn that Hefner adheres to the double standard. What is astonishing is that in a book purporting to be about the flesh, everyone is made of cardboard.

It has been suggested that the movie moguls, who have already paid $2.5 million for the book, will make a story of the lives of John and Judith Bullaro, a middle-class couple who sought to escape the boredom of their lives by attaching themselves to Sandstone's "erotic commune," where people "relate honestly and openly with each other." Unhappily—though not surprisingly—the Bullaros are no less boring after group sex than they were before. "Erotic consumerism" and "recreational sex" effects a transformation that is only skin-deep. Actually, for one moment I thought there might be a story here: Bullaro, witnessing his wife being penetrated by "a penis that in the firelight looked like a burning red rivet," seeing "the foreign fetid penis oozing in and out of her," was—Talese tells us in a portentous you-are-there voice—"convinced that the balance and order of his life had been destroyed. . . . A vengeful John Bullaro quietly plotted the murder of John Williamson," Sandstone's guru-entrepreneur, "and also contemplated his own suicide." Neither murder nor suicide takes place. No story. Despite the Bullaros' "learning experience" at Sandstone, they just go on being boring.

There may be no story, but there is no dearth of characters, some of whom one would rather see elsewhere than at Sandstone—Daniel Ellsberg, for example. "Hefty penises, noodles, curly female pubes, fine, bushy, trimmed, dark, blond, red valentines" abound in this "adult playroom," to which Dr. Alex Comfort, Max Lerner, and people one would gladly see nowhere at all—Orson Bean, for example—come to be "eroticized." A cast of thousands, but no story.

Speaking of Ellsberg, to hear Talese tell it, all politics, and all political events, including Watergate, are genitally determined. Only a sly man could seek to justify pornography in a sentence that puts *Screw* on the side of the angels: "*Screw* quickly assaulted the Nixonian bourgeois culture." (And only a ridiculous man could say of Al Goldstein, *Screw's* publisher—whose "tongue was a more potent weapon than his penis"—that "as his mouth was upon" a bedmate, "he was conscious not only of the luxuriance of her loins but also that he was making a literary connection with Henry Miller." What things people with "weapons" think of in bed!)

Talese makes me laugh. I can't help it; he ought to make me angry, but he makes me laugh.

He doesn't make me laugh when he tries to pass himself off as a populist—as opposed to those "elitists" among us who find pornography distasteful. "Nude art . . . in great museums was created for the nobility and upper classes . . . while the photographs that appeared in magazines were printed for the common man in the street, whose museum was the corner newsstand." Convince me—Talese can't—that Goya's maja and a picture of a woman being fed through a meat-grinder appeal to the same instincts and impulses. Nowhere does Talese even attempt to define the difference between erotica and pornography. I would have found that interesting.

Never does he tell us where the kids of all these sexual libertines are, or what they think of their parents' carryings on. I would have found that interesting. I find it ludicrous—and if Mr. Talese believes his own words he's even dopier

Coming:

W.A. Swanberg on Helen Keller.

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than I think he is—that the men at Sandstone were there to bridge the generation gap: "They often gained insight into the alienated generation they had helped to sire." Tell me another.

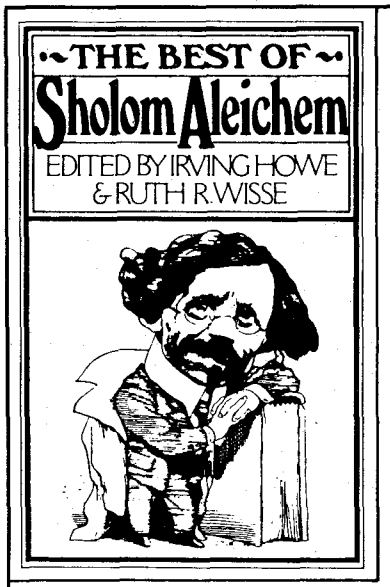
One might also laugh at Talese's rabid anti-Catholicism (it can't have escaped your notice that all his books have biblical titles), were it not so pitiable; one might also say pathological. Irish Catholic mothers, who are invariably married to drunken fathers, and "latent homosexual" priests are the villains in this book (though "dour Jewish women" come in for their share of blame). His hatred of the Church is so intense that it causes Talese to desert, momentarily, his fierce advocacy of the First Amendment. "Its liturgy, based on myth, went unchallenged by the government because it mollified great masses of people who might otherwise be rebelling in the streets against the injustices of life on earth." Talese puts these words in someone else's mouth—he calls this device "nonjudgmental" writing; but it's clear from the context that he agrees with them absolutely. I'd love to see Talese "challenge" the liturgy in court; he'd be thrown out on his First Amendment.

Talese parrots Reich: he mistakenly holds that "religious tradition" regards sex as "evil," and that religious leaders "deny the body." But it is not the Church that denies the body—hence the promise of an earthly resurrection; it is the pornographers who deny the body by objectifying it—hence "Hefner would not print any advertising that focused on male problems or worries, such as baldness, physical frailty, or obesity." Talese is wildly out of control, he can't help himself. He even places pimps in "Lenten-purple" automobiles. What writer but he would grimly seek out, "in the strongly Catholic, Daley-dominated city of Chicago . . . a downtown [massage] parlor decorated to resemble the interior of a church," complete with "ornate dark-wood bookcases in which were displayed hardcore sex magazines and dildoes"?

The Church (which Talese, in his monomania, confuses with the Puritans) may indeed have contributed to an atmosphere of sexual repression—look what it led to: Talese. But by Talese's own admission, only six Catholics have served on the Supreme Court during its nearly 200-year history. This is a fact not to be disregarded when one is talking about obscenity trials. Talese does talk about obscenity trials, and this is potentially fascinating material. But precisely because of his myopic secularism, he does not place obscenity trials in any social context—which is what I would call more than a slight flaw in a book that is touted as a social history. It is enough for him to cast the Church as villain; cultural and secular forces at work are blithely disregarded, as are the opinions of women. There has been a melt-down at the core of this book; it is hollow.

Talese's bigotry is bound to offend me because I am Catholic. But one does not have to be Catholic to be offended by Talese's hatred for the penis. He may not know he hates the penis, but he does. I am a feminist, as is every responsible human being I know, but in my wildest dreams, and in my wildest anger, I would not be capable of expressing these man-hating, loathsome sentiments: "The penis was designed by nature for waste. . . . Nothing less than castration will eliminate the lure of prostitution, adultery, or pornography. . . . The penis . . . is . . . the male curse. It has made some men restless roués, voyeurs, flashers, rapists." *Nothing less than castration.* If ever a man were more to be pitied than scorned it is Gay Talese.

Who has the effrontery to suggest that only "man-hating" feminists are offended by whips and chains and manacles and kiddie porn? (And I suppose only "asexual activists"—or "latent homosexual priests"—find snuff films hateful. Talese doesn't talk about snuff films. He wouldn't dare.) A *good* feminist is someone like Betty Dodson, who is "cunt positive," and who invites men to "consciousness-raising sessions" where women are engaged in "running the fuck," and where their self-examination reveals to them that clitorises "vary in size and shape from recessed pearls to protruding bullets." A



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good feminist believes that "marriage is a form of prostitution. . . . Saving sex for my lover was my gift to him in exchange for economic security. . . . I was forced to bargain with my cunt for . . . economic security."

While Talese consorts with these "cunt positive" women—who seem to me more than a little cuckoo—he wonders fleetingly why few women are "aroused by the sight of an erect penis *unless* they are warmly disposed to the man who [is] attached to it." Well, if he's writing a book about the sexual revolution, he ought to do more than wonder fleetingly. It has not escaped my notice that many, if not most, men differ from many, if not most, women in their approach to sex. Never—in 548 pages—does Talese seriously explore the reasons for this contrast between the sexes.

Or the love that exists between men and women. Love? Does love have a nodding acquaintance with sex? Is that possible? In the final pages of his book, when Talese, who is beyond embarrassment, suddenly refers to himself in the third person, he tells us, with thundering banality, that "there are times in marriage when it is more important to 'like' than to 'love'. . . . Talese's own marriage, which had been in existence since 1959, and which now included two young daughters, was responding adversely to the flagrance of his research." Nan Talese left him—for a weekend. One does not wish to speculate on the true nature of their relationship; and, in any case, Talese, whose next book will be—God help us!—the story of his life, will probably tell us all about it. My guess is that most readers will have ceased to care.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison is the author of *Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses* (Simon & Schuster). *Off Center*, a collection of her essays, will be published by the Dial Press in May.

Sweden: The Middle Way on Trial by Marquis Childs

(Yale University Press; $12.95)

There are countries that suffer at the hands of linguistic imperialism. Sweden is one of them; Holland is another. Small, relatively homogeneous, and speaking a language practically no one else understands, they develop brilliant ideas and put them into practice but never get the historic credit they deserve. For example, Ernest Wigforss, the brilliant theoretician of Swedish socialism in the 1920s, anticipated some of Keynes's ideas and, even more to the point, helped make them work before anyone else, yet he remains unknown to most English-speaking people (a Pole, Michael Kalecki, may also have formulated Keynesianism before Keynes, but no one speaks of Kaleckism). And the Dutch Labor party is one of the most interesting and innovative political movements in the world, a fact not known by even the most assiduous readers of the *New York Times*.

There is another fate that sometimes befalls those countries that cannot tell their own story: they become the object of rather simple caricatures which, even though they are well intended, are still unfair. In 1936, Marquis Childs published an important book, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, describing how the social democrats in that country were systematically applying counter-cyclical policies (Roosevelt stumbled into such a strategy and, in 1936-37, tried to stumble out of it, with disastrous results; the Swedes were working on the basis of a conscious plan). Childs's study had the great merit of rescuing an extremely important social and economic experiment from behind a linguistic curtain which was impenetrable for all but a tiny fraction of the world.

Authors, however, do not control the interpretations of their books—alas—and Childs's original analysis became the basis of some journalistic half-truths. Sweden, it was widely believed, had indeed chosen the "middle" way, that is, it was non-extremist, a fact to gladden the heart of many an American. Its socialism therefore was pragmatic, incremental, cooperative, and eschewed class war. The reactionary reading of the same data held that Sweden was consequently dull, gray, alcoholic, and suicidal, that last theme being a favorite of Dwight D. Eisenhower. It did not matter that Wigforss and Gunnar Myrdal and other Swedish socialist theorists were exceedingly sophisticated analysts and that their party was, perhaps more than any other, dedicated to a theoretically grounded *praxis*. Nor that the moderate gains were the result of class struggle and of a very class-oriented political mobilization. As for the suicide rate, it had been high long before the socialists ever appeared (it has to do, one suspects, with the weather and the theology). Indeed, it is comparable to the WASP suicide rate in the United States, where Catholics and blacks kill themselves less than white Protestants and help out the average; and in any case the American homocide rate is much higher than the Swedish. Which proves?

More recently, Ingmar Bergman's films and his celebrated tax case have added another touch to the Swedish picture: this is a nation of neurotics, adulterers, and over-taxed people which is gloomy in the winter and frolicsome in the summer. In this adverse context, Marquis Childs's return to the scene of his earlier book is most welcome. Politically, he asks the central question. "The reforms of the middle way," he writes, "have been far-reaching and costly. In slicing the economic pie, little is left for investment funds essential to industrial development and the competitive position of the Swedish economy." That is a theme that is central to American conservatism of the past decade—even though the United States is the *least* taxed Western industrial democracy and consequently has the cheapest welfare state.

In Sweden, however, the left as well as the right has recognized the problem of capital formation, and the moral they derive from it is radical. As Childs rightly puts it, the socialists and trade unionists "ask whether a welfare system . . . as comprehensive as it is in Sweden can be sustained in a society where the means of production are so narrowly held. Or does the existence of a privileged owning class make the full step to socialism inevitable in a democratic state?" I wish I could report that Childs gives adequate answers to the excellent questions he poses. He doesn't, not so much because he proposes wrong

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answers as because his book is impressionistic and journalistic, omitting much that is necessary for a serious answer. Within that limit, it is useful in documenting the responses of a sympathetic observer. Still, I think the Swedes deserve more than that.

For instance, Childs's history tends to jump from the 1930s to the late 1970s. During the Depression, the socialist emphasis was on stimulative deficit financing. When the war ended, the Swedish left thought—as did businessmen around the world—that a serious economic crisis was imminent and proposed steps toward socializing, not simply distribution, but production as well (though Wigforss and Myrdal, the architects of that program, can hardly be called "ideologues," which is Childs's word). The party then retreated, not out of any innate Swedish, or social democratic, tendency toward compromise but because the electorate clearly rejected radical change. Two recent and excellent books—John D. Stephens's *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* and Walter Korpi's *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism*—document the way in which the agreement of labor and capital was a result of their relative power positions and not of the state of their souls.

But—and this is a period that Childs mainly ignores—that does not mean that the Swedish socialists simply settled for Keynesianism. In the late 1940s the unions and the party came out for an "active labor market policy" which forced inefficient firms out of existence but provided for the retraining and relocation of their workers. Then in the late 1950s, with strenuous opposition coming from the bourgeois parties, the socialists pushed through a funded social security system and gained a new power to direct investment toward socially useful areas like cooperative housing. Finally, in the 1970s the unions pushed for a "solidaristic" wage policy which, in Rawlsian fashion, systematically discriminated in favor of the least paid in the society.

Ironically, as Childs reports, it was that last measure that helped orient the socialists toward "collective profit sharing," that is, gaining worker and public control over production by means of democratically run mutual funds which receive a portion of annual profits in the form of voting stock. For the solidaristic policy actually tended to favor the most efficient and profitable corporations whose skilled and productive workers received less than they would under a dog-eat-dog wage bargain. At the same time the problem of capital formation became critical in the system, as in the rest of the Western world, and collective profit sharing was seen as a way to give the workers a real stake in deferred consumption and new investment which would not increase *their* wealth.

Childs skims over these important developments, which is better than nothing but not enough. As has so often happened before, the Swedish socialists are facing up with imagination and verve to problems confronting the industrialized world and are moving, for the first time and in a highly innovative way, toward the socialization of production. The Swedish conservatives are faced with the same crisis: they have nationalized more property in four years than the socialists did in 44 years—with excessive compensation to the rich—and care not to allow too much participatory democracy. Since I think the critical issue of the next period is not collectivization versus Adam Smith but authoritarian, corporate, and conservative collectivization versus communitarian, democratic collectivization, I welcome Childs's book and recommend Stephens's and Korpi's analyses for more serious answers to the highly relevant questions posed in *Sweden: The Middle Way on Trial.*

Michael Harrington

Michael Harrington is author of the recently published *Decade of Decisions* (Simon & Schuster).

The Twyborn Affair by Patrick White

(Viking; $14.95)

Patrick White is a novelist who degrades his characters and disconcerts his readers. He mercilessly probes, picks, peers, sniffs at his creations, who ignominiously writhe while we squirm. One routine debasement he inflicts on them is food; the unappetizing digestive ordeal is an expression of the existential ordeal all endure in White's seamy world. He serves them mutton chops dripping with fat, gray mounds of yesterday's boiled cabbage and potatoes, and he watches them devour the mess, taking note of the lip-smacking and the dribbling. Instead of fulfillment, they feel discomfort after feeding and they fart. Imprisoned in flesh, White's characters voraciously seek a spirit of love in the world to lighten their lives, but they never find it. The best they manage is to expel the fetid spirit within, for momentary but hardly exalting relief—and that does little to inspire love in those near them. Unsavory displays of these bodily functions (and others) crammed into large books also do little to encourage readers, even hardy ones.

The protagonist of *The Twyborn Affair* is among the more bizarre characters that White, Australian author of more than 10 novels and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1973, has produced. Eddie Twyborn is twice-born, as a man and as a transvestite woman (actually as two different women—first as 25-year-old Eudoxia, mistress to an aged Greek, and then, after a male interlude, as middle-aged Mrs. Eadith Trist, madame of a London brothel). Surprisingly, White, who customarily manipulates uncongenial characters with varying degrees of disgust, graces this protagonist with his sympathy, and the changeable E. comes to life as a hapless fellow sufferer rather than a kinky phenomenon. What's more, White, who frequently discomfits readers with what seems to be gratuitous prying into sordid lives, does us the kindness of offering a glimpse of his motives. Late in the novel White tells of the concealed peep-holes Mrs. Trist has built into each room in her brothel, and as he explains her impulse, he points toward his own as well.

> She could not have explained how a common peep-hole becomes an omniscient eye, how it illuminated for her the secret hopes and frustrations struggling to escape through the brutality, the thrust and recoil, the acts of self-immolation, the vicious spinsterly refinements which shape the depravity of men—her own included. She would have liked to believe

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that, even if it did not purify, lust might burn itself out, and at the same time cauterise that infected part of the self which, from her own experience, persists like the core of a permanent boil.

This tormented religious perspective is an unusual one for a proprietress of a bawdy house and an unfamiliar one for a contemporary novelist—and an uncomfortable one for readers. Like his protagonist, White has both the "stern puritan" and the "savage nymphomaniac," the "moralist" and the "sensualist," the "nun" and the "whore" in him. He is divided between an aspiration

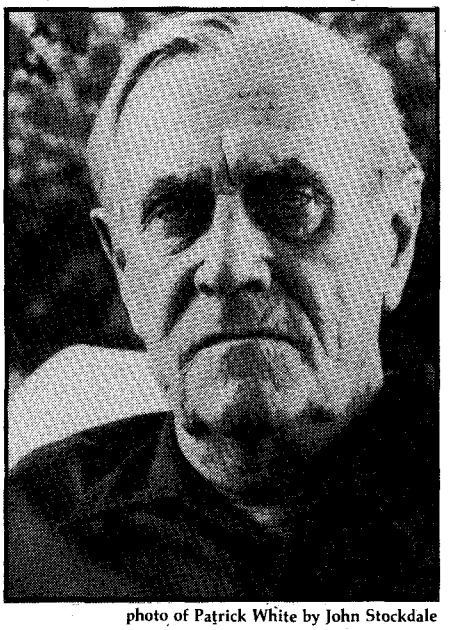

photo of Patrick White by John Stockdale

toward a life of the spirit and a more riveting obsession with the debased life of the flesh, which together inspire him to yearning and loathing, high seriousness and irony, inflated prose and ruthlessly minute description.

Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith Trist, "pseudo-man-cum-crypto-woman" in search of a true self and a glimpse of love, endures three lives of physical mortification. In prose as concrete and convoluted as the matter it describes, White anatomizes the "material facade" that hides the "spiritual nakedness" within his protean character. Only the details of that facade change; its basic form remains the same. Eudoxia displays a "pomegranate shawl" and occasionally, to her anxiety, unfemininely big feet; Eddie sports new boots, body hair, and, more uneasily, a new pose, "hands on his hips as he had seen men do"; Mrs. Trist gets up in "purple drag," "mauve powder," "elaborate, tortuous" jewels, but worries about "signs of decay" showing through. Eudoxia indulges in early morning passion with wrinkled Angelo; Eddie submits to sticky late-night heavings with soft Marcia Lushington, his employer's wife; Mrs. Trist miserably masturbates. (White doesn't neglect more minor forms of abuse: Eudoxia has a scab on her elbow which Angelo picks, Eddie pops his own raw blisters, Mrs. Trist digs at a scab on her knee.) The three of them feed and fart at frequent intervals.

The "defenceless grub," as White at one point calls the lonely soul encased within these different outfits and mortified by these successive ordeals, barely undergoes a metamorphosis. Eudoxia does not know who she is, feels shame and disgust for the false approximation of a self that is all she can claim, and is almost pathetically eager to lose that self in devotion to another. Resorting to his natural body, Eddie does not discover a true self or love, and only grows more impatient at his disorientation. And Mrs. Trist, no more enlightened, lapses into extreme self-loathing. Each of these agonizing souls, however, is granted a cleansing moment of self-escape, a temporary "salvation . . . in the natural phenomena surrounding those unable to rise to the spiritual heights of the religious faith." On a quasi-suicidal impulse, Eudoxia plunges into the sea off the coast of France in search of "fulfilment by immersion." Eddie has "a brief and unlikely love affair" with the expanse of Australian hinterland he retreats to. And Mrs. Trist slips out every day at dawn "to receive the kiss of the morning, the more acceptable for being so delicate and abstract compared with the sweaty, abrasive, rib-cracking embraces of venal men." But the redemption is ephemeral, while the psychic torments are inescapable.

White's imagination garishly illuminates the depths of his character's psyche in Mrs. Trist, after scanning its less abysmal levels again and again through his long book. (He encloses his lurid description of her hell between parentheses, as she conceals her agony beneath thick make-up and behind locked doors.)

> (Only when giving way to her inner nature after a few brandies, masticating with the ugly greed which a gob of chewing-gum induces, seated at a dressing table opposite a probably fake rococo mirror in the small but splendid room referred to by the innocent or generous as 'Madam's boodwah', she could have cried, in fact she did let out a yelp or two, for the actuality she had been grasping at all her life without ever coming to terms with it. On reaching one of the lower levels of her dilemma, she would fart at her own reflection in the glass, and after pressing the flavourless gum into a crevice of rococo plaster, fall on the bed, ruffling her body-hair, heaving and sobbing, and if favoured by images and orgasm, perhaps drop off for an hour or so.)

This is a sudden dip into nightmare in the course of a life that White often depicts as if it were an extended bad dream in his vivid, disjointed, exhaustive narrative. Like a foundering dreamer, E. is disoriented throughout, aware that he/she is out of control and making no progress. But even abject Mrs. Trist is game for more, prepared to rise from her bed and go mingle with her whores—fondling them while they lounge awaiting their clients as the night begins, cooking a dish of kidneys and onion rings for a favored male visitor as the early morning arrives—and even to grapple with another doomed impulse toward love.

It is difficult, but not impossible, to be still game enough to want to watch and care about this depraved, despairing bawd after some 400 often unpalatable pages. At his best White makes us, along with his characters, endure the foul truth of man's imperfectability with the irony and energy that can sustain hope against hope in the impossible prospect of final redemption. But all too often plain disgust overwhelms him and us. Thankfully, unlike his characters who are doomed to "everlasting torments," we can finish the book with a sigh of relief that the trials White so graphically and powerfully renders are over.

Ann Hulbert

Brief Review

Kennedy for the Defense by George V. Higgins

(Knopf; $9.95)

Jeremiah Kennedy is a Boston lawyer who specializes in defending sleazy clients, they include a lavender youth charged with committing a lascivious act; a slightly older youth who has to commit a crime in order to pay for Kennedy's services (wanted because he was afraid he might commit a crime); and a veteran car thief who is being harassed by a state trooper in a singular manner: the trooper stops him, asks for his registration, eats it, and then arrests him for driving without a registration. These clients descend on Kennedy ("while my name is Kennedy, I am not

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related to the bastards") just when he is in the midst of his summer vacation on Boston's South Shore, whence he must rush back to the city to tend to their needs, meanwhile neglecting to notice the brewing troubles of his noble wife and nubile daughter.

Mr. Higgins, author of *The Friends of Eddie Coyle*, tells his story through long monologues, which are often funny but too uniform (his Bostonians all sound alike, "this is true" being one of their favorite locutions) and too labored-over for my tastes. This garrulity, moreover, retards the pace of his rambling plot, which wanes, with our attention. A compensating dose of social observation, accurate or revelatory, might hold our wandering interest. But the most Higgins supplies in this line is the mere naming of local places, and while East Milton Square and Braintree Highlands have resonance for me, I doubt they will mean much to those who did not have the luck to grow up in Boston. As for Higgins's specialty, his talk, it is a wonderful invention, but as a guide to the diverse patois of Boston it is of dubious accuracy and as credible speech it has all the spontaneity and naturalness of a play in verse. I have the feeling that critics have lauded Higgins for his dialogue, doubtless under the delusion that it was authentic, and that this is why he eschews description, narrative, and evocation, for talk, talk, talk. (He even goes so far as to have characters overhear long conversations, a device that ought to have gone out with Polonius and that deserves his fate.) I hereby dispraise him for his talk, and hope that in his next novel he finds a way of sweeping it along with a more energetic plot.

Jack Beatty

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THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

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Washington Diarist

Vox Pop

Amid the usual Washington and Tehran datelines, the *New York Times* of Friday, April 14, carried a front-page report from Cupka's Luncheonette in Pittsburgh, where the customers had a variety of observations about the election campaign. The same day's *Washington Post* carried a dispatch from Lapko's Bar and Grill, not far from Cupka's. The people of Cupka's were much more forthcoming than the crowd at Lapko's. The *Post* man soon was reduced to quoting the commonplaces being dished out "privately" by "some Carter campaign advisors"—presumably not at Lapko's. At Cupka's, the entire conversation was on-the-record. The remarks were neither more nor less acute than what journalists ordinarily offer from their usual august sources. In fact, they were virtually identical. But they had the great, though ephemeral, advantage of coming from "the people." Newspapers, especially the snob appeal papers like the *Times*, the *Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, put great stock in these ritual exercises of populist piety (though in this age of the pollster they are careful to label the results "unscientific"). They apparently feel that an occasional foray into a bar, or a factory parking lot when the shifts change, can help to purge them of the insularity that comes from talking only to bigshots and one another. Years ago I lost a *Post* summer internship because, said the editor who interviewed me, it was time for the *Post* to cover fewer antiwar rallies and more boy scout jamborees, and I did not strike him as the type. Now it seems as if there are half a dozen *Post* journalists fanned out across the country at all times, feeling the pulsebeat of America. I presume they are all boy scouts. This development has been a great blow to the nation's cabdrivers, who used to have exclusive franchise on conveying the sentiments of the general populace to the mandarins of the press, and thence back to the general populace.

My employer occasionally has said he'd like to strangle me. It is only a flash of annoyance, nothing you could get a whole book out of, and I wouldn't bother to mention it except for the current outbreak of assassination chic here in Washington. Once it was status enough to have appeared on John Dean's enemies list, and glory beyond all imagining to have been bugged by Henry Kissinger. Now everybody who is anybody is going around claiming that Nixon's henchmen tried to have him killed. The list begins with Liddy himself, who once offered to stand on any street corner and wait for the bullet as atonement for the failure of the Watergate break-in. In his new book, *Will* (St. Martin's Press), Liddy reveals that he also had plans to assassinate E. Howard Hunt and Jack Anderson. Fortunately, both survived to enjoy the cachet. And last week Spiro Agnew claimed that a murky assassination threat from General Alexander Haig is what persuaded him to resign as vice president. In promoting his new book called *Go Quietly . . . Or Else*, Agnew said that Haig told Agnew's military aide, "we are off to the races and cannot control the situation any longer—anything may be in the offing. It can and will get nasty and dirty." Agnew drew the obvious conclusion. Washington thrives on stories like this. Thanks to Liddy and Agnew, social climbers are loitering ostentatiously on street corners looking furtive. Meanwhile the rats swimming away from the Carter administration are explaining that they feared for their lives when the president told them, "There are no easy solutions to the problems facing our country."

Following Arthur Schlesinger's fusillade three weeks ago, a White House friend asked plaintively, "Why don't you get a prominent intellectual to write an article defending Carter?" Fair enough, but who? We have been going down our list of prominent intellectuals from Alsop to Zinn. (Haven't heard from us? You must have been out.) But so far there has been no taker. One P.I. said he supports Carter over the alternatives, but without enthusiasm. I said enthusiasm would be nice, but could I come back to him if, after further search, we were forced to lower our standards in that regard? He said no. "The trouble is, I support him now, but who knows what he might do between the time I wrote the article and you published it?"

The judges have completed their deliberations in our contest to name 12 distinguished members for a National Commission on Everything (Washington Diarist, *TNR*, April 5). Congratulations on the high quality of the many submissions. I thank you, our nation thanks you. I thought that I had eliminated all the most oppressively predictable names (Father Hesburgh, Coretta King, John Gardner, and so on), but you came up with many tedious suggestions. Elliot Richardson, the most former man in America, was the most popular choice, with four listings out of about 20 submissions. Tied for second, with three votes apiece, were Averell Harriman, Barbara Jordan, Eric Severeid, Cesar Chavez, and William Scranton. (Scranton, so well known and yet so nearly forgotten, strikes me as an especially incisive choice.) Dr. Joyce Brothers, Norman Cousins, Kermit the Frog, and Arthur Goldberg were among the most amusing names to get two votes apiece. Richard Block of Woodstock, New York, heeding my warning that the deceased would not qualify, listed an alternative for Averell Harriman, just in case. But then he ruined a list that had some real high points (George Romney, Leontyne Price, Roy Wilkins, Margaret Truman) by including Al Capp, who is much more deceased than Averell Harriman. And the winners are (pause) Mr. Bradley Seeman of Boston for:

Elliot Richardson, Chairman
Mr. Alex Haley, Vice-Chairman
The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce
Mr. Theodore White
Mrs. Happy Rockefeller
General Maxwell Taylor
The Honorable Henry Cabot Lodge
The Honorable Douglas Dillon
Kermit the Frog
The Rev. Martin Luther King Sr.
Princess Grace
Mr. Eric Sevareid

Judges' comment: a bit unbalanced in favor of Republicans and the East Coast, but unmatched for ponderousness. The other winner is Mr. Barry Gradman of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania for:

Neil Armstrong
Shirley Temple Black
Roger Staubach
Derek Bok
Ed Brooke
Walter Cronkite
Charleton Heston
Harold Hughes
Lane Kirkland
Bess Myerson
Beverly Sills
Kermit the Frog (chair)

Judges' comment: After leading from strength with Armstrong, this list starts to wobble with Bok and Brooke. (Why not Hannah Gray and Tom Bradley, for sex and geographical balance?) But it quickly picks up momentum with Heston, and finishes strong with Sills and Frog. The Commission will begin its deliberations July 4 at the Aspen Institute. Until then, meeting adjourned.

M.E.K.

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GM's first Project Center brought out totally new full-size cars: smaller, yet roomier, and far more efficient than their predecessors. The advertisements said they were "designed and engineered for a changing world"—and they were. Another Project Center, begun in 1975, developed the immensely popular GM X-cars.

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